



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

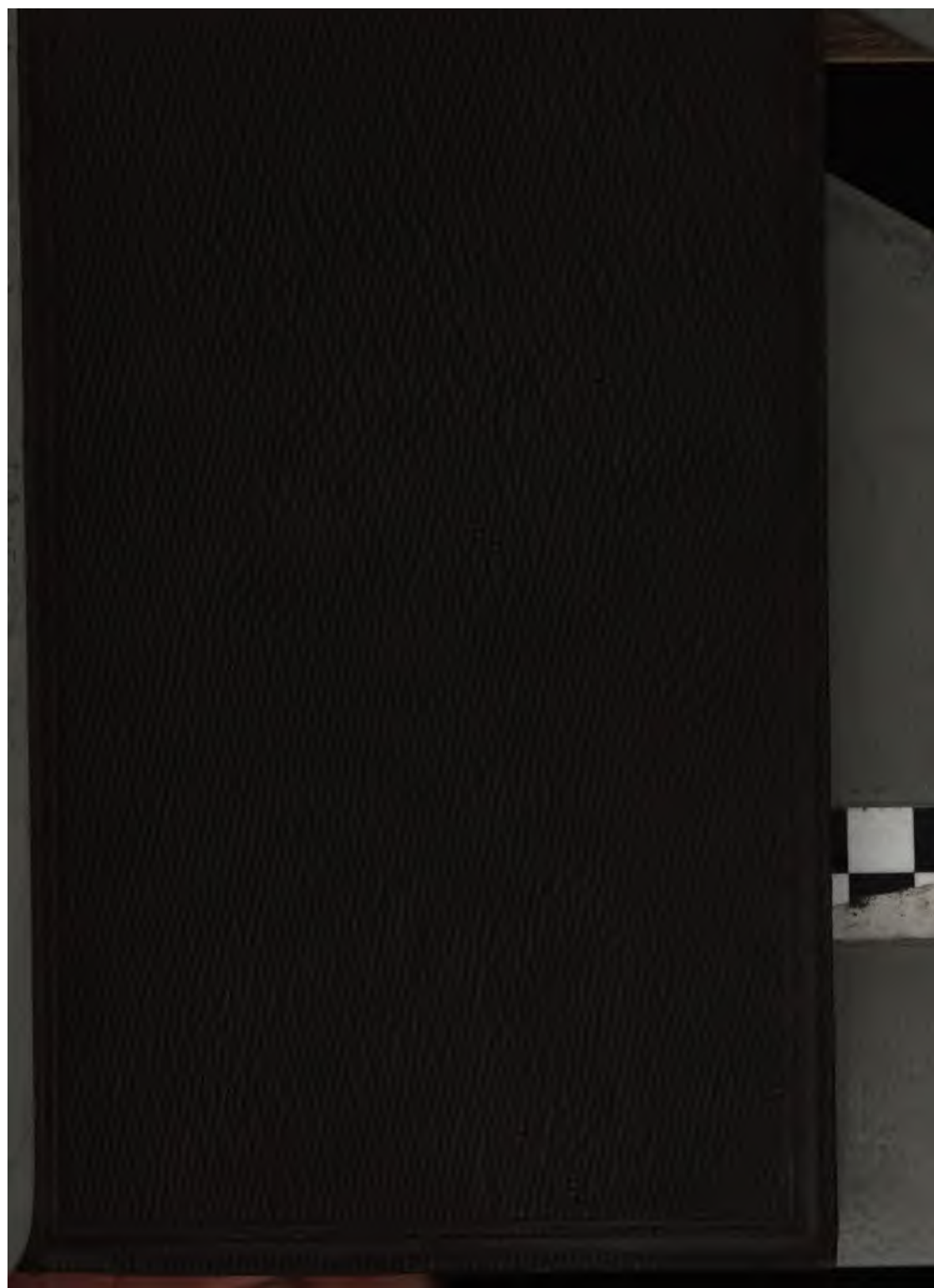
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>







1

2

3

A

# Farewell Sermon

PREACHED TO A

COAL-MINING CONGREGATION

AT

CLANDOWN CHURCH, SOMERSETSHIRE,

ON THE

AFTERNOON OF SUNDAY, JANUARY 31, 1858.

BY THE REV.

THOMAS TROUGHTON, M.A.

LATE INCUMBENT.

Published by Request.

LONDON:

JAMES DARLING,

81 GREAT QUEEN STREET, LINCOLN'S-INN-FIELDS.

MDCCCLVIII.

100. 4. 254.



TO THE  
INHABITANTS OF CLANDOWN.

---

MY FELLOW CHRISTIANS,

In the following pages, I give you, with much pleasure, the Discourse which most of you recently heard from my lips.

Many passages in them were not preached : the delivery of all would have detained you too long. Possessing a printed copy of these my parting exhortations, you will be able to consider them, and to compare them with the Bible, at leisure.

They were hastily put together by me, when unfitted for any exertion of mind by the indisposition which has compelled me to resign a beloved charge ; and therefore cannot be expected



to satisfy a critical reader. With a blessing from on high, they may, notwithstanding, prove useful *to you*.

Written with the design of being addressed to you, they are applicable to yourselves in particular.

Accept them as a memento of one who, though absent in body, will often be present in spirit with you.

Farewell for Time. That we may all meet in a perfectly holy and happy Eternity, is the prayer and hope of

YOUR LATE PASTOR.

*Bath, 1858.*

1 *Cor.* vii. 29, 30, 31.

“BUT THIS I SAY, BRETHREN, THE TIME IS SHORT: IT REMAINETH, THAT BOTH THEY THAT HAVE WIVES, BE AS THOUGH THEY HAD NONE; AND THEY THAT WEEP, AS THOUGH THEY WEPT NOT; AND THEY THAT REJOICE, AS THOUGH THEY REJOICED NOT; AND THEY THAT BUY, AS THOUGH THEY POSSESSED NOT; AND THEY THAT USE THIS WORLD, AS NOT ABUSING IT; FOR THE FASHION OF THIS WORLD PASSETH AWAY.”

SHORT, indeed, my friends, does the time appear, which has elapsed since the day when I mounted the steps of this pulpit for the first time, and addressed you upon the following passage, taken from the second chapter of the prophet Malachi:—  
“The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity. For the priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of

Hosts.”<sup>1</sup> That sermon I uttered on the afternoon of October 24, 1852. Since that occasion more than five years have passed over each of your heads and mine : we are respectively more than five years older, and nearer to the grave. This period, during which we have known each other as minister and people, appears short indeed to look back upon. Trifling may be the incidents with which it has been occupied by you and me, in the eyes of the world ; but *none* of them trifling as regards *ourselves* ; seeing that not a word have we exchanged, not a thought have we, directly or indirectly, suggested in each other’s breast, which shall not one day be adduced in the presence of an assembled universe, and tell for or against us. And who can calculate how many are the thoughts to which, during this period, we have mutually given rise, and for which we are more or less accountable ? Perhaps some one inwardly objects, that a very insignificant proportion of our respective thoughts has been so occasioned in any degree. Be it so : the fact remains, nevertheless, that during every waking hour you and I have been thinking, often vaguely enough, but still thinking, about something ; every waking moment a thought of some

<sup>1</sup> Mal. ii. 6, 7.

kind has been passing through our minds ; and also during a great part of each of the one thousand nine hundred and twenty-five days, which have passed since the commencement of my ministry, words have been, more or less, continually proceeding from our lips ; and we know, on authority which we profess implicitly to believe, that every such word, every such momentary thought, every most transient flash of our imagination, instantaneously forgotten by us, is not forgotten elsewhere, and (unless cancelled by our possessing a saving interest in Christ) has its future penalty annexed : it has served in its measure to aggravate our condemnation, and of it we shall in these very bodies immortalised, be experiencing the dismal consequences, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of years after our death ; yea, when this world and all that it contains, shall have been burned up — a fact, solemn when pondered by the best ; reasonably alarming to some, who unwisely choose, ostrich-like, to hide it from themselves ; a fact, nevertheless, which we see can be treated with defiant unconcern by the vast majority of those who profess to believe it : I say *profess*, for they do not, they cannot, believe in truth ; they cannot believe it in any such sense as they believe things relating to this

world only, and still be quite uninfluenced in one way or another. Oh! the power of the prince of darkness, even in privileged England—the modern Israel—despite all our pulpits, all our societies, all our schools, our legally-protected Sabbath, our cheap, and unadulterated, and open Bible!

What effects, then, ought the knowledge of our so stringent accountableness to produce in us? Surely unceasing circumspection, deep prayerfulness, and frequent self-investigation. The thorough sifting of our inner and outer conduct, may well be made a stated business of every day we are permitted to breathe. The leisure of each returning Sabbath should, in part, be devoted to a further sifting of the preceding week. The anniversary of our birthday, or the commencement of a new year, when we are just passing, as it were, another milestone in the journey of life, should be made a special season for a most comprehensive discharge of this great duty. Nay, if resolved with all our soul, by God's help, to be saved, we shall gladly avail ourselves of other and extraordinary occasions to consider our ways. A change of pastors undoubtedly constitutes one of such occasions. In what measure, then, and in what manner, have you and I respectively been influenced during

the last five years, by the knowledge of our accountableness? What fruits have we to show, and what excuses to offer for our shortcomings?

As regards myself, I can truly appeal to Him above who knoweth all things, how bitterly I have lamented in secret my inability to see more of you, and cultivate a more intimate acquaintance with you at your own homes; how continually the longings of my heart towards you have been thwarted and nullified by my infirmities of body; how, from this cause alone, I have often been kept back from visiting a chamber of sickness, when my outward movements seemed to warrant a very different interpretation of my absence: nay, have been wishing perhaps (but wishing in vain), to execute some duty of my office, which would have occasioned another man scarcely a thought. Not, however, that I would be supposed to mean thus to extenuate *all* my many omissions and deficiencies. Far from it. Have no less justifiable motives never mingled with this plea of want of adequate health? Have I never, on grounds which on calm self-scrutiny could not satisfy conscience, let slip a golden opportunity of uttering a word in season to the backslider; neglected to caution and encourage the young; admonish the careless; counsel the wavering; entreat and help forward the aged; offer to

the afflicted the only true comfort ; and, as occasion served, instruct the ignorant in the best of wisdom ? “ Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord : for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.”<sup>1</sup> At the same time, there is at least one consideration, upon which I feel that I may dwell with thankful satisfaction :—no one of you can accuse me of unfaithfulness in this pulpit through the fear of man ; and that, though I may have displeased individuals thereby, I have, in my occasional animadversions on the general contempt of God and religion, the bestial intemperance, and other evidences of fearful depravity which disgrace this district, stated nothing which any were able to contradict. I trust that I can aver, that I have sought to deliver to you only the truth ; and you will bear me testimony that I have besought you continually, that in so paramount a question as what is likely to be your unchangeable condition in a future state of being which shall have no end, you would take nothing upon trust, but “ prove all things,”<sup>2</sup> searching your Bibles diligently whether the things which I have been wont to say, were so,<sup>3</sup> uncharitable and dark-sided as my declarations may sometimes have seemed ; and that you should consent to be fol-

<sup>1</sup> Ps. cxliii. 2.<sup>2</sup> 1 Thess. v. 21.<sup>3</sup> Acts, xvii. 11.

lowers of me, only so far as I evinced myself a follower of Christ. But, alas! my friends, even though on that terrible day when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, I should prove to have been ever so blameless on these points, I know well, that could all the negligences and errors of the few years during which I have preached the kingdom of God among you, be at this instant arrayed in one view before my memory, overwhelming would be the apparition! My consciousness of them cannot recall the past; may it stimulate the future! and whatever in my example, or in my words from this awful spot, has been agreeable to God's will, heartily do I pray that it may take root in your remembrance, and influence your lives.

What has been its effect hitherto? Have you extracted all the spiritual benefit possible from my unworthy ministry? Let me remind you, that nearly six hundred times has the bell of this church invited you up hither to congregational worship. How many of those times has its sound reached your ears unheeded? If it has at any one time, have you had an excuse which you verily and sincerely believe fully satisfied Him who saith, "I, the Lord, search the heart?"<sup>1</sup> You can never

<sup>1</sup> Jer. xvii. 10.



have causelessly stayed away without offending Him; and yet it is quite possible that even your coming may have been worse than vain: "God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."<sup>1</sup> Whenever, then, you have been present, of what sort has been your attendance?

Let me suppose some one of you just having entered this afternoon. In SEATING YOURSELF, you may have been observed to lower your head to the edge of the back of the bench<sup>2</sup> before you, covering your face for an instant with the palms of your hands, as though engaging in prayer. Now, has this been, on your part, a sham gone through in conformity with the general practice? Has it been a mere mechanical act, in which your thoughts and feelings had really no share? Or have you been in sincerity lifting up your heart to God for His blessing on the worship in which you were about to join? and have you been striving at such times to realize some conception of Him whom you were addressing? some sense of your obligations, helplessness, and needs?

The EXHORTATION :—Have you usually let it fall upon your ear with utter indifference, as a familiar,

<sup>1</sup> John, iv. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Note A.

humdrum form of words? Or, have you been of the few seen always looking at their books during its delivery, and seeming to enter into the spirit of what was being read with ever fresh interest?

With the words, "saying after me," you sat down, leaning forwards (must I say, *knelt down*?<sup>1</sup>), as though joining in the CONFESSIO, and were supposed to call yourself a "miserable offender." But did you, in all seriousness, look on yourself as such? Have you really ever felt miserable because of your offences; unless, perhaps, for some inconvenience or temporal loss consequent on your commission of this or that sin?

In a few minutes afterwards, you found yourself engaged in the LORD'S PRAYER: calling upon the Almighty as your "Father." In so addressing Him, did you, or did you not, belie your secret feelings towards Him? Were they in delightful unison with the expression? Are you, in very truth, at this moment, able to look up to the Most High as *your own* reconciled Father in Christ? Do you feel towards God (though in an infinitely higher degree) as you feel towards the kind parent whom you are tenderly fond of, and would be painfully grieved to displease in anything?

<sup>1</sup> Note B.

You proceeded to pray, "Hallowed be thy Name." Now, though you may not, like the poor brutalized coal-carters of these parts, have been wont to indulge in coarse and hellish imprecations, has there not been too often, in your conversation with your companions, a most wanton introducing of the name of God, under a silly notion that it gave an air of manly smartness and pungency to what you were saying? Have you never given utterance to some sneering remark upon seriously-minded persons, and, in them, on the principles of the Gospel? Have you been more disappointed when prevented from attending the worship of God's house, than when prevented, on some week-day, from going to your ordinary employment? Have you never, when within these walls, honoured God with your lips when your heart was far from Him? Have you been more disquieted and hurt by hearing another take the Almighty's name in vain, than when a neighbour has spoken something insulting towards yourself?

You next prayed, "Thy kingdom come." On the subject of giving money in furtherance of the accomplishment of this petition, I have no need to dwell. Your monthly contributions, through the hands of your children, in aid of Missions,

have been most worthy of imitation.<sup>1</sup> It is certain that no really earnest believer can feel otherwise than deeply anxious about the condition of the heathen ; it is, however, quite possible for a person to manifest a most devoted zeal on *their behalf*, who is practically careless about the condition of his own soul. It will be profitable, therefore, to suggest a few questions to your conscience on this clause. Suppose, then, that instead of opening your eyes this morning on the mild light of the risen sun, you had been aroused from your slumber by the archangel's trumpet, apprising you that the judgment-day was come, what would have been your sensations ? Would you have awoke to consciousness with composed joy, as knowing that at last your redemption was nigh ? or would you have been overwhelmed with horrible despair ? Take another test. Suppose that the offer were made to you of 50,000*l.* a-year, from to-day forward, with perfect health of body and mind, and this for ever : would you, or would you not, grasp at such an offer, willing, thus circumstanced, to remain here below, in the world, just as it is, for ever ? Would you, or would you not, be satisfied to do so, even with your *present* share of earthly

<sup>1</sup> Note C.

comforts, *whatever it be*, if only it could be *permanently secured* to you, and renounce at once all hope of ever being with Christ, ever seeing heaven, or knowing its happiness? Were the option granted you, would you this evening sit by your fireside, among your family, and any neighbours who may drop in to talk about worldly matters and others' doings, or would you incomparably prefer to find yourself before the Throne on high, in the company of just men made perfect? Are your stated seasons of secret communion alone with God, the happiest portions of each day? Would it be the consummation of your dearest wish and longing, to be at this instant prostrating yourself in overflowing gratitude, at the footstool of that All-glorious Majesty, before whom adoring cherubim and seraphs are now veiling their faces? If it would not, can you have been very ardent in your desires when you prayed, this very afternoon, "Thy kingdom come?"

You proceeded, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." Did you really wish this? Honestly, would you like the world better if everywhere you met with nobody but holy men and holy women, and if only righteousness were permitted or practised? If you think that you would, it behoves you to ask yourself, Do I exert

myself to the utmost, embrace every opportunity, employ all my influence, however limited, to bring about so blessed a state of things? Is it your prayerful aim and effort, each day you live, to become, in your innermost thoughts, purer and more completely conformed to the mind of Him with whom you have to do? Do you, in all simplicity and truthfulness, ask, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting?"<sup>1</sup> Do you as sensitively shrink from a thought of wickedness, as from the touch of a glowing iron? Would it afford you more thorough gratification to discover an increase of your power over some besetting sin, than that your wages were raised? Were the choice offered you, at this hour, of being put into immediate possession of a very large estate, which, throughout its entire extent, you have good reason for believing to be an unworked bed of mineral; or of having some of those parts of your hidden character which are most displeasing to God, corrected and purified by His grace (it being understood that such defects, unless now remedied, are to adhere to you until death), upon which of the

<sup>1</sup> Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24.

two would you decide? The estate? Then, is it not clear that, at bottom, you value more the good things of this world than a perfect doing of God's will? Can you say that during the past week, you have been habitually striving in everything to govern yourself by your Bible, even when it most thwarted your own inclination? Did you make God's written standard of right and wrong your sole rule? or, were you not more or less swayed by what this or that neighbour might say or think? Would you, or would you not, feel more vexed and disquieted, were one of your children unintentionally to break a dish, than if you discovered that the same child had, of set purpose, broken a Sabbath? that he had directly offended God and not yourself? Recall your feelings under any bereavement or cross with which you may have been afflicted. Did you, in complete contentment, placidly resign yourself to the will of the All-wise and All-good? or did you, in your hidden breast, maybe even in word, murmur? Did the event produce a careful and complete ransacking of the inner man, in order to discover whether or not you had left some sin unrepented of; whether or not you had unconsciously been falling back instead of "growing in grace?" in short, did it rouse you to ascertain, if possible, the cause of your visitation?

You next joined in asking, "Give us this day our daily bread." Now, tell me, do you practically believe at all in a superintending Providence? In supplying the daily wants of yourself and family, do you not feel that, in reality, you must altogether look to your own toil? Or, do you strive to cherish a lively sense of your dependence on the Sovereign Bestower of your requisite health and strength? If, when in search of work, you found yourself just in the "nick of time" at a place, so that you got a vacant situation before some other man, did you own a Divine hand in the fact, or did you ascribe it altogether to your "good luck?"

You have begged of God, more than once this afternoon, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." Were you in earnest? Did you wish Him to take you at your word? to pardon your every offence against Himself, only just so far as you, from your heart, are ever ready to forgive? Have you never offered this petition while knowing that you harboured a secret grudge; and thus, in fact, supplicated your own condemnation? It may be that, within the past week, a neighbour has spoken to you in a way purposely irritating; or it may have come to your knowledge that a certain person has charged you falsely behind your back. What effect had his or



her conduct upon you? In what spirit did you bear it? In the temper befitting one who feels how continually he is himself trying to the utmost God's forbearing mercy? Suppose that, to-morrow forenoon, a person shall act offensively towards you; do you really think that you will strive, in a power not your own, to "overcome evil with good?" or will you deem it a mark of weakness not to retaliate?

Again you petitioned God, "Lead us not into temptation;"—do Thou keep us from getting into it; or, if in it through surprise or a call of duty, do Thou bring us safely out of it.—Has this been sincere in you? Have you never wilfully and needlessly ventured into companies, where you knew that your religious integrity would be imperilled? Have you not done so within the last twenty-four hours? Might you, or might you not, last night be found seated in a place, where Satan and his agents would not suffer any man to show himself a Christian? Imagine all that was uttered in that room written on a paper, and now reproduced, read before us in this assembly; would it well bear the light? Would it exhibit no "filthiness or foolish talking?"<sup>1</sup> or only an interchange of sentiments

<sup>1</sup> Eph. v. 4.

worthy a party of rational and immortal beings, of fellow-disciples of Christ? You may, or may not, have been there; but if you were, do not forget, that you had an unseen Companion present with you all the while, who heard every syllable which passed those lips of yours; was privy to every unuttered thought within you;—even He who has been likewise present here with you this afternoon, and of whom you have just presumed to ask, “Lead us not into temptation.” I might enumerate a variety of ways in which you may have belied your offering of this petition. Have you never done so through the eye? For example, if, on glancing it down the columns of a newspaper, you have met with a paragraph of impure or profane tendency (and you can scarcely take up a journal free from such insertions), have you persisted with secret gratification in reading through the same? or have you passed by it at once, as congenial indeed to the carnal heart, but hateful to a great unseen One above, who was cognizant of every line you were perusing? Have you, in short, chosen to satisfy a guilty curiosity, though knowing at whose hands you will one day suffer the penalty of your indulgence? Are you in the habit of allowing to wicked imaginations a passage through your mind? Do you care not to be on your special

guard as to your besetting sin? Perhaps you habitually and deliberately indulge your particular moral infirmity (whatever you know it to be), on the plea of its being found by you incurable, and therefore, as you would fain seduce yourself to believe, venial. If so, you cannot have uttered without horrid mockery this clause of the Lord's Prayer, craving His preventing grace.

In the same prayer, you lastly implored the Almighty, "Deliver us from evil." Upon this I will suggest but one enquiry. You may have been brought low by sickness, and yet been revived. Underground you may have had hair-breadth escapes from destruction of body, and probably of soul, by the snapping of a rope, or the falling of stone or earth upon you. Did you, on those serious occasions, feel that you owed entirely to God and His kind providence your "deliverance from evil?"

The reading of the PSALMS shortly followed. What have they seemed to you? Perhaps unintelligible often; lengths of unconnected verses often; sometimes spiteful; in general, the extravagant complainings of a man dead ages ago, in reference to peculiar circumstances and enemies of his own; and your being obliged to stand the while has been felt rather an irksome waste of time

and strength? Or, have you been wont attentively to listen to them—to take part in them as indeed words inspired from on high—and, consequently, if rightly used, “profitable, for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness?”<sup>1</sup> Have you humbly endeavoured to make them thus profitable to yourself, tracing out the Saviour typified in them, and discerning how they may be accommodated by any man in earnest about advancement in holiness, and accustomed to watch himself, to his own spiritual experience, and his conflict with the enemies of his soul?

What have you made the reading of the LESSONS? A listless resting-time?

After the chant succeeding the Second Lesson, is said the APOSTLES’ CREED, which is, as you are aware, a concise summary of the principal doctrines of Scripture, wherein

First, you declared your belief in “God the Father Almighty.” Now your belief in any truth of a worldly nature, modifies your course of conduct in proportion to the degree in which you consider that it may affect your worldly interests; and according to the importance which you attach to

<sup>1</sup> 2 Tim. iii. 16.

it. What degree of influence, then, does your belief in "God the Father Almighty" exercise? what, your knowledge of His never-forsaking, ever-observant presence with you, in private and in public, by night and by day? In short, what is your measure of awe, of love, of trust? If, as you may be inwardly conscious, practically little, then, assuredly, you are deceiving yourself if you imagine that, in any *saving* sense, you are believing in Him.

Secondly, — you avowed, this afternoon, your belief in "Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord." *How*, then, do you believe in Him? It is quite possible only thus: you vaguely and superficially assent to the several particulars recounted concerning Him, as what it is usual for everybody to accept; as what, indeed, you have no means of disproving, but about which, in reality, you never disturb yourself further than coming within hearing of them once on most Sundays. Or, maybe, you can affirm that you feel as thoroughly persuaded as you do of any remarkable historical facts whatever, that "Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost, was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, rose the third day afterwards, ascended into heaven, and thence will return some day to judge mankind." But is this all? If so, could St. Peter, were he now living upon earth, write to you, "To

you which believe, He is *precious*?"<sup>1</sup> But, perhaps, the person sitting next to you flatters himself that his is a faith, not like the mere head-belief just described. What, then, my friend, is the nature—the extent—of *your* faith? Remember, an apostle states as much as that unless Christ be "precious" in our esteem, we do not believe availingly. In what degree, I must therefore ask, do you value the Saviour of sinners? Often Christ's name is in your mouth, and you do value Him perhaps, but not so much for your own sake as for others', for the sake of *sinners*. You contemplate, with generous concern, numbers around you—the drunken of both sexes, the unchaste, the profane, and the dishonest; and as you compassionate their state, you think how wonderful is the mercy of God in providing even the faintest hope for such lost ones; and, with a pious sigh, you trust in the Lord that their dark eyes may be opened in time, and that through unmerited grace they may find their way to their only Refuge. As for yourself, you rejoice in the knowledge that you are in a state of grace. You are able to inform us in what year you were converted; the month of the happy event is impressed

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 7.

on the tablet of your memory ; of the day when it took place, you can particularize all the most trivial incidents, and especially where you were, and what you were doing, at the precise time when you became enlightened. Indeed, you delight in keeping alive in your own recollection the very wonderful manner in which God dealt with you, when He was pleased to look down upon you, then a poor ignorant wanderer, by letting slip few opportunities of detailing all about it for the benefit of others. Perhaps you would hesitate to assert that even now you are quite sinless (Oh ! no, who can so say of himself ?) ; still, in your heart of hearts, you are not so dissatisfied with this or that occasional little error or short-coming—usually constitutional rather than wilful—as to feel much need of any atoning merits of another on your own account ; but you admit to yourself that even you must not dare to dispense with Christ altogether. Would that the foregoing were a sketch of an imaginary character. To not one of you present does a still small voice seem to say, “There is some truth in it ?” If there be, I will only remind any such self-righteous man or woman, “To you Christ cannot be precious ; and you must have been deceived or deceiving, when this afternoon you declared your belief in Jesus Christ our Lord.”

But you may not have recognised your own kind of faith in any of the three descriptions given. Are you, then, indeed, one of whom it is pronounced, "He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life?"<sup>1</sup> Will your faith bear to be tried by the test more than once applied by our Lord Himself when on earth? If genuine, it will. Two blind men implored Him to have mercy on them. "According to your faith be it unto you," was His answer. And they saw instantly.<sup>2</sup> A centurion besought him to heal a sick servant. "As thou hast believed," was the reply, "so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the self-same hour."<sup>3</sup> Is yours a faith so entire, so all-dependant? Suppose that, very shortly, on your way out through that porch, you were to fall down dead in a fit of apoplexy. If on entering the world of spirits, you should find yourself dealt with according as you have in humble helplessness reposed your complete reliance on Christ as your only hope of salvation, while striving by grace, out of adoring gratitude to Him, in everything to live up to His Gospel, — what would be your fate?

But, thirdly, you have publicly professed to-

<sup>1</sup> John, iii. 36.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. ix. 27-30.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. viii. 13.



day, "I believe in the Holy Ghost." Now, honestly tell me whether you do not consider that you can think a right thought—a thought with which God could find no fault—of your own unassisted self? Do you not entertain a latent conviction that, by your own natural firmness and strength of will, you are capable of carrying out any right purpose you may form? that you can "sign a pledge," and thereupon resist steadfastly temptations whereby you have formerly been enslaved? that, by your own natural sagacity and common sense, you are quite able to comprehend as much of the meaning of Scripture as is needed for salvation; and not only so, but competent of yourself to apply effectually this or that particular passage to its correspondent defect in your character? What, then, do you believe of the Holy Ghost?

The Creed ended, you are called to unite in a series of PRAYERS, "all devoutly kneeling."<sup>1</sup> Have you knelt down? or have you indolently sat through them? Have you really prayed them? Have your thoughts been kept diligently to the subject of each? or been freely roaming? Has your tongue been employed with the responses, or found other occupation?

<sup>1</sup> Rubric.

As each prayer has concluded, have the words, "through Jesus Christ our Lord," or other like words, fallen upon your ear as merely the regular way of closing prayers, and without which from habit no prayer would seem to be complete? or have you been wont at all adequately to feel their pregnant import?

Has the making our *Queen* a repeated and prominent subject of prayer, been felt by you an unwelcome introduction of a political element into our worship, unfavourable to the current of devotion? or have you viewed it as an acting up to St. Paul's injunction?<sup>1</sup> Have you discerned the expediency of it? first, on *our own account*, as subjects; forasmuch as a sovereign's principles of conduct and manner of life exercise a most important moral influence, for good or for evil, upon the habits of a people, from the highest class downwards; and, secondly, on our *Queen's* account,—one who must be an object of sincere sympathy to every truly Christian Englishman, from a consideration of her responsibility, her peculiar snares, and (despite royal splendour) her lack of ordinary freedom and comfort?

Among the Afternoon Prayers regularly used,

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. ii. 2.

is one FOR ALL CONDITIONS OF MEN, which I have had need latterly to preface with a request for your special intercessions on behalf of our countrymen and countrywomen in India. When, therefore, you have heard the words, "We commend to thy Fatherly goodness all those who are any ways afflicted or distressed, in mind, body, or estate, especially those for whom our prayers are desired," have you at once thought of what was happening on the far-off plains of Hindoostan, from which such heart-sickening accounts were continually reaching us? or must you confess to having cared little about them, and been usually buried in indifference? If the latter, have you indeed done as you would be done by? Had you yourself been one of those poor creatures massacred at Cawnpore, or outraged at Delhi, or beleaguered in Lucknow, would you not have hoped that, at least, you had no lack of sincere sympathizers in your beloved native land? that your fellow-Christians, living in security at home, were surely all feeling for you; yes, heartily pleading on your behalf before God? Had you known that there were any in whose breasts your condition excited not sufficient interest for this—no interest, except as matter of news,—would you not have deemed (and rightly so) every such person most unfeeling,

unworthy the name of a Christian? Or, to go back three or four years, who is able to say how many of those twenty-five thousands who in our late inglorious, yet costly war with Russia sank under disease, or were cut off by the foe, closed their eyes on the sick-ward or the battle-field, faithful indeed, to their monarch, but in rebellion against their Maker? "It can only be known at the last day," you reply. Well, but is each of you sure that on that day no neglected responsibility towards them will be found to lie at your door? Might no soul now in misery, and whose mortal tenement has long ere this turned to corruption in some dead-pit of the Crimea, say to any of us, "Ah! had you besought God for me as became you, possibly my present condition might have not been what it is?" Or can each one of you affirm for himself, "Verily, I am guiltless: Acutely was I mindful of our harassed and ill-fed soldiers, and truly did I sympathise with them in their bodily privations; but specially did I put up my constant prayers for the timely repentance of the thoughtless appointed unto death, and for all needful assurance and comfort to the God-fearing and prepared; and with humble confidence I trust that my supplications will prove to have not been in vain?"

There are, again, OCCASIONAL PRAYERS, *e. g.* the two appointed for Ember-weeks, when our bishops are ordaining persons to the priesthood and diaconry ; and that “for the High Court of Parliament during their session.” Has the occurrence of these prayers faintly arrested your momentary attention as a trifling variation of the usual routine, but met with no further response from within ? or have you welcomed them with earnestness, and endeavoured through grace to follow the reading of them in your heart ? I trust that I may believe the latter of most of you. For, surely, when we seriously reflect how that on the spiritual, intellectual, and even bodily fitness of those few who at any one time are admitted by a bishop into the ministry, the perdition or happiness throughout eternity of tens of thousands, of thousands yet unborn, may, more or less, depend ; and when we consider how that every bishop on whom the incalculable responsibility of ordination rests, is invested with no preternatural power of seeing into the hearts of any presented to him ; who amongst us can neglect, at such solemn seasons, to combine his own hearty intercession for our chief pastors, that God would so guide and govern their minds, that they may lay their hands on no man too hastily ; and for those to be “ordained to

any holy function," that they may be endued with the grace which they so much need, in order to be faithful teachers and examples to the souls, with whom they are to be entrusted?<sup>1</sup> And so, likewise, who amongst us can indulge in dreamy unconcern, while the prayer is being offered for our legislators, hereditary and elected, and especially for those of either House who are ministers of the Crown? Oh! if, bearing in mind the weakness of fallen nature, we have ever duly thought upon the manifold snares besetting persons so situated,—their temptations to look to self-aggrandizement, to popularity, to the serving of the interests of relatives and private friends in preference to the claims of patriotism, to the holding cheap the dictates of uprightness and candour when conflicting with the demands of party; if we at all adequately appreciate the stupendous fact, that by the wisdom or imprudence, by the equity or injustice of their enactments, are affected not only our own, but the temporal well-being and religious interests of scores of millions of the human family; not forgetting that, in this age of vaunted "progress," avowed enemies of the National Church are "liberally" allowed an equal voice in framing laws for its

<sup>1</sup> Note D.

benefit ; if, under all these considerations, Englishmen, and particularly Churchmen, think it not worth the while to *pray* for their rulers, let them cease to *blame* them.<sup>1</sup>

Among the prayers less frequently used, suffice it to mention that appointed for “ a time of War and Tumult,” with the words of which you have become familiar, from its having formed (with a short interval) a regular part of our Sabbath-worship, since the commencement of our late conflict with Russia. Maybe some of you have offered the same (if at all) in somewhat of a revengeful spirit. But is not such a feeling characteristic of an unrenewed heart ? “ To me belongeth vengeance and recompense,” saith the Almighty ;<sup>2</sup> and it is our duty, therefore, to leave it with Him, and to be content with asking that He would be pleased to frustrate our enemies’ designs against us, and to grant success to our arms in a righteous cause.<sup>3</sup>

Just before the closing “ prayer of St. Chrysostom,” you have professed to give “ Almighty God, the Father of all mercies,” “ your most humble and hearty thanks for all His goodness and loving-kindness to yourself and to all men.” Now have

<sup>1</sup> Note E.

<sup>2</sup> Deut. xxxii. 35.

<sup>3</sup> Note F.

corresponding emotions of felt gratitude burned within your breasts? or has the welcome sound of the familiar opening of the GENERAL THANKSGIVING usually aroused you from a state of weary satiety, to the pleasing knowledge of the fast approaching end of "the Prayers?" Believe me, sincere gratitude is not a common virtue. Many would have us take for granted that they entertain it, who, if not deceived respecting themselves, wish to deceive us. We all, of course, know what constitutes gratitude, when we consider it to be due from another to ourselves.

Suppose any one of you had, in my stead, been the minister of this district, and you had called in to see some poor neighbours to whom you had done many kindnesses. The mother of the family is all smiles and flattery during your stay; but on finding you about to leave without mention of any gift, changes at once into sullen reserve. You would not account her a thankful person.

Suppose that you dropped in to see another neighbour for whom you had done something; but had scarcely well seated yourself, and had begun to ask about the family, when this or that member was always sure to have a failing appetite, and to have been declared by the doctor in need of port-wine and substantial delicacies, which, so scant



were her husband's earnings, it was utterly impossible for her to procure. Would you mentally pronounce that poor woman grateful or grasping?

Suppose that you passed on to another's cottage. Here, despite frequent help, the wife was always found slatternly and forlorn, her brood of little ones, begrimed and half-naked, always clinging about her own unwashed, unmended skirts; her apartment always the same sty of destitution, disorder, and discomfort. By her ever-pathetic narrations, she excites your pity whenever you visit her; she worms something out of your pocket: you go from her door sadly musing on the lot to which some are born, though angered by the inexcusable neglect of thrift and cleanliness, so manifest in the case you have just witnessed. But, alas! at length you discover that you might well have spared your sympathy; that you had been all along the dupe of imposture; for your eyes have been accidentally opened to the fact that each Saturday night is spent by this woman, away from her hearth and children, in drinking with the fellow-parent worthy of herself. "A thankless pair!" you would say.

Suppose that you next called at the door of an humble dwelling, contrasting agreeably with the last, for the interior is clean and tidy. You

find the wife busied in her housework ; the husband seated near the fire, lean, pale, rueful in look, and in the garb of abject poverty. One of his very frequent "chills" has incapacitated him for work to-day. Seldom, however, has he been prevented thereby from being seen in his place at church. You think favourably of him, and (especially as he can scarcely be said to beg, except in a very indirect and unobtrusive way), you gladly, in his case, act up to the Apostle Paul's injunction, "Do good unto all men, especially unto them that are of the household of faith."<sup>1</sup> Your alms elicit ample gratitude, and your visits are always welcome. You are informed confidentially, that he is a companion of reprobate persons, his wife being worse than himself. You are unwilling to believe. But an incident ere long confirms what you have heard, and induces you for the present to discontinue your assistance. Simultaneously public worship is forsaken ; and you are henceforward less ready to trust the thanks, uttered from a demure face, in a fawning and feeble tone.

How many similar cases could I cite, were it desirable to do so ! Gratitude is so rare indeed between man and man, as to be matter of agree-

<sup>1</sup> Gal. vi. 10.

able surprise, whenever discerned. Not that for a moment would I be supposed by any of you hereby to insinuate, that whatever may be your faults, ingratitude to man is the characteristic of yourselves *as a people*. I would not so wrong you. Had I ever harboured such an opinion of you, the most affecting and gratifying experience of the last few days, and particularly Friday evening, would have effectually dissipated the impression. Proofs were not wanting before.

I have at this moment before my mind an aged widow. Her allowance from "the guardians for the poor" is two shillings per week. Out of this pittance she is expected to keep herself in being and to pay her rent. She earns nothing by her own exertions ; for which she can urge in excuse that she saw twenty or thirty years of the last century, and yet upon her wrinkled countenance beams placid content ; not a murmur about herself have I ever heard from her ; and the gift of a small packet of tea (a precious luxury) moistens her eye with the tear of gratitude.

Again, I recollect, some time ago, meeting a parishioner ascending the brow near my house. He had come from the farthest extremity of the district, to express personally to me his acknowledgments for allowing his daughter, then about to

enter service, to attend Clandown school. That man showed unquestionably, by the trouble he had taken, that he was really thankful.

But I should be unfaithful if I did not remind you that, to whatever number I might multiply like pleasing instances, there may be felt deep gratitude towards some fellow-creature, while your incomparable, or rather inconceivable amount of obligation to your supreme Benefactor, though not in words disowned, is perhaps only in words acknowledged. Say what amount of religious thankfulness is to be fairly inferred in such cases as the three following respectively.

Imagine yourself a clergyman. You go to pray with a truly pitiable invalid. The mother of the family with whom she lodges, receives you civilly. In conversation with her, you intimate that although her children regularly come to school, you do not remember having ever seen her husband at church. She explains that he might perhaps attend, were he not ashamed of appearing here on account of his baldness. You next express a hope that you may have overlooked herself in God's house, as you cannot call to mind when you last observed her here. She grows irritated, and impudently declares that she seldom or never enters a place of public worship. You ask her, in reply, whether she is

deliberately of opinion, that in so doing she exhibits a befitting pattern to her children, to speak nothing about her own salvation. With an air of pert indifference, she answers, "O yes, they never see anything but what is good in me; and hear from me naught but good advice." To this you would rejoin, as I have done, "I fear, my friend, that your good advice will all be thrown away, so long as it is unsupported by your personal practice." On quitting the threshold of such an one, I dare say you would ask yourself, "Can this so-called Christian woman, while thus habitually and wilfully despising His hallowed day and His house, sincerely feel that she has any cause of gratitude towards God? Can she, on any rare occasion when she has appeared among us, have joined without mockery in the 'general thanksgiving?'"

Or, again, it is Tuesday morning. On your way to officiate at a marriage in an adjacent parish, you fall in with an aged inhabitant of your district. He is an irregular church-comer, and you have not observed him among the congregation for some weeks. You ask him how he is. He tells you that he has been prevented from reaching church by his infirmities. You do not express your internal cogitations, but such thoughts as these suggest themselves:—"When I first caught sight of

my friend a minute ago, he seemed active and energetic enough both with hands and feet ; have his infirmities left him since the day before yesterday? or have they disabled him chiefly on Sundays? I wonder whether, if a full day's wage had been offered to him for attending public worship, the cold and rheumatism of which he complains, would *still* have prevented him from getting up to church. I cannot but suspect (mightily as I should offend him were I to tell him so), that he would have been seen twice in God's house upon each of those Sabbaths which he has lost. But alas ! if a two-shilling coin would have made him do that which no sense of duty, no opportunity of *spiritual* benefit could—is it not plain that indolent indifference about his soul, and contempt of God, have had more to do with his absence than the alleged want of health ? Can he be really thankful for the measure of health vouchsafed him ? for his 'preservation' to the advanced age at which he has arrived ? Impossible !”

Once more. You visit a cottage where dwell a healthy pair without children, the husband having constant employment. You enter a room beautifully clean ; the table being covered with an unsullied white cloth, and set out in perfect order for the evening meal. The scene strikes you as one

which a painter would at once choose for a picture of humble content. But are appearances always reliable? Enter into conversation with that tidy woman (her husband has not yet come home). You will not have talked long before you hear her repining over her great difficulty of “making ends meet; what they have to live upon, is so very small.” At the same time you well know that this is as much as another earns, who with six children never complains. Alas! outwardly she and her partner appear “both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless;” but is her heart in unison with the worship she offers Him? She is plainly much dissatisfied with His treatment of them, and with the lot which He has assigned them. How, then, can she sincerely join in thanking Him “for all the blessings of this life?”

Pass your judgment, if you will, on the several cases which I have been depicting; then judge yourself by them: and, even if you do not recognise yourself in any of them, say—Are you indeed thankful to God as you ought to be? Are you as mindful to express your gratitude to Him for any blessing when granted, as you were to supplicate Him in the hour of perplexity?

But to proceed. After a hymn, which, (as

also the previous hymn and chaunts), I trust, if able to read, you have sung “with the spirit and with the understanding also,”<sup>1</sup> “singing with grace in your heart to the Lord,”<sup>2</sup>—follows THE SERMON. Has this been to you a declamatory repetition of the same insipid talk on the same trite and threadbare subject? Or, knowing that God hath ordained, by “the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe,”<sup>3</sup> have you, with child-like teachableness, like a man bent upon the one thing needful, been always eager to extract all the good possible—just as the alert bee seeks, and therefore gathers, honey from the commonest flower of the field? Remember, however, that the bee, in its pursuit of honey, looks not for sweetness but for *food*. Have you been of the number of those who seem to have a sensitive unwillingness to be ever reminded of the Divine threatenings, wishing what they hear, to be exclusively sweetened with the promises; desiring, in fact, in their pastor the very thing which the Almighty so repeatedly rebuked in His unfaithful ministers by Jeremiah; “healing (saith He), the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly; saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace;”<sup>4</sup> unconsciously influenced by

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xiv. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Col. iii. 16.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. i. 21.

<sup>4</sup> Jer. vi. 14.



the infatuated principle of those Jews in Isaiah's time, who "said to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits:"<sup>1</sup> thus vainly preferring to have their spiritual pride fostered, and their consciences left undisturbed in a fictitious security, instead of the same being probed at the risk of present pain, in order (if needful) to a timely and radical cure? To adopt the words of Bishop Hopkins, "There is a certain instinct in a child of God, whereby he naturally desires to have the title of his legitimation tried; whereas a hypocrite dreads nothing more than to have his rottenness searched into. Try yourselves (saith he) by this. Do you love the word of God because it is a searching word—because it brings home convictions to you, and shakes your carnal confidences and presumptions? Do you love a ministry that speaks as closely and particularly to you, as if it were another conscience without you—a ministry that ransacks your very souls, and tells you all that ever you did? \* \* \* \* This is a sign that your condition is good, because you are so willing to be searched."<sup>2</sup>

I. I am happy in the persuasion that some, at

<sup>1</sup> Isa. xxx. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Bishop Hopkins's Works, p. 553.

least, of you can reply, with humble confidence, affirmatively to the queries which I have proposed : and to such among you, I will now address a few parting words.

You have counted the cost, and deliberately enlisted yourselves among the decided followers of Christ. You and I, my dear friends, have spent many happy Sabbaths together in this little sanctuary. May all future ones be to you, as I trust these past have been, preparative for an eternal Sabbath in the courts above ; where our worship shall be that of angels, unalloyed by any uprisings of evil—exempt from the infirmities of fallen humanity ! Most of you have gladdened me by your presence here on a Lord's-day morning, the only occupants of those half-empty benches. And why ? You have had the willing mind ; the lack of which, I fear, was the true and genuine cause of the absence of your neighbours generally. About sixty of your number have I been wont to see, with more or less frequency, at that holy table, on the first Sunday of each month.<sup>1</sup> Surely have not these seasons seemed blessed to your spiritual edification and comfort ? You, at least, always felt it good to be there. You conceived it to be

<sup>1</sup> Note G.

only meet, right, and your bounden duty, to show forth your humble thankfulness to the Saviour of your souls in His own appointed way ; seeking therein a closer and closer union with Himself—a surer and fuller interest in the privileges of His Divine friendship ; and anticipating, in joyful faith, the sharing erelong with all the saints of God—with familiar ones who have gone a little while before us, or of whom, in the wisdom of Providence, we have otherwise lost sight—in that marriage-supper of the Lamb, of which our earthly communion is so faint an emblem. Yes ! how blind soever others may be, you whom I am at this moment specially addressing, have become aware of the value of a man's soul to himself and in God's sight : you have become, through grace, alive to the conviction that to live in obedience to God's will, as revealed to us in the Bible, is alone to live as reasonable and accountable beings : you have ascertained experimentally, that the heartily religious man is the only really happy man : the felt love of Christ has constrained you, that you should no longer live unto yourselves.<sup>1</sup> It was doubtless this conviction, this sense of the debt yourselves owe to Him who came to seek and to

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

save them who are lost, which actuated some of you a while ago to proffer your assistance as teachers in our Sunday-school. You did so wholly unsolicited ; and, therefore, I have great confidence that you will persevere in the good work. For, let a man undertake such an office from any mere worldly motive, he will soon tire of it. Unless his heart, as well as his conscience, be thoroughly enlisted in them, he will not long task himself with duties, which he will find dull and irksome indeed. You, however, I feel sure, have acted from loving choice. Go on ; be faithful, and may an abundant blessing from on high attend your endeavours ! Sow in faith ; but do not be too sanguine of early fruit. It may not, for wise reasons known only to God, be permitted you to enjoy ocular proof of your success. This or that object of your gravest solicitude, and most careful effort, may be obstinately and thanklessly wayward ; and, for aught you may know, continue so long after you have done with him, and lost sight of him in this world ; and yet be one of the foremost to welcome you with tears of gratitude in the mansions of bliss. Yes ! be prepared to meet with severe trials of temper occasionally, with many a discouragement and disappointment. But oh !

you are serving a Master who will pay you well. Not only are you making yourselves useful members of the community; not only are you setting a praiseworthy example of self-denial for the good of others; not only are you most important fellow-helpers of your pastor; but—sublime, inspiring reflection!—you are fellow-workers with Christ in the salvation of the little ones under your charge! But beware of viewing with complacency your own exertions in the good cause. Office-holding in God's service, (though multiplied, it is said, in some religious bodies for the better securing of proselytes, and to find employment for the more enthusiastic,) is, I am persuaded, one of the devil's very successful snares. "What an excellent person you are!" whispers he to the holder; "Christ can never refuse you admittance into His kingdom—you who take upon yourself so much trouble for His sake." And those amongst you who have become communicants, or even regular church attenders, have not done so without Satan's cognizance, and quickening his envious malice. Be prepared for him trying to make you think well of yourselves. Forget not that he has an ever-ready accomplice within you—a "heart deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: who can know

it?"<sup>1</sup> And be assured of this: the more an advanced Christian, by the light of God's word, searches down into his actual condition, and the more he truly knows of himself, the more thoroughly dissatisfied must he be with the result of such self-acquaintance, and the more will his feelings coincide with those of Bishop Beveridge. "I do not only (says he) betray the inbred venom of my heart by poisoning my common actions, but even my most religious performances also, with sin. I cannot pray, but I sin; I cannot hear or preach a sermon, but I sin; I cannot give an alms or receive the sacrament, but I sin; nay, I cannot so much as confess my sins, but my very confessions are still aggravations of them; my repentance needs to be repented of, my tears want washing; and the very washing of my tears needs still to be washed over again with the blood of my Redeemer. Thus, not only the worst of my sins, but even the best of my duties, speak me a child of Adam: insomuch that, whensoever I reflect upon my past actions, methinks I cannot but look upon my whole life, from the time of my conception to this very moment, to be but as one continued act of sin."<sup>2</sup> It is an apostle's admonition,—“Be clothed

<sup>1</sup> Jer. xvii. 9.

<sup>2</sup> “Private Thoughts,” Art. IV.

with humility.”<sup>1</sup> Each of you well knows, that in whatsoever measure you may excel this or that neighbour in spiritual enlightenment and self-discipline, it is *by the grace of God* you are what you are;<sup>2</sup> and you feel how every accession of grace vouchsafed brings with it a proportionate responsibility, that you show it forth in your life and practice; and you are sensible how lamentably you fall short of so doing. Nay, were there no higher motive to constrain you, you are quite aware how impolitic any exhibition of pretence on your part would be; seeing that by your daring, in the faces of your neighbours, to be not one of themselves—by your evident adoption in sincerity and downright earnest, as your actual rule, of that Gospel, which with people generally is a mere matter of profession—by your being plainly uninfluenced in your conduct by motives, which with others are of paramount consideration—by your despising or abstaining from things in which those around you find their chief pleasures, and your mysterious superiority to what enslaves them—your very presence among them is, from week to week, a silent sermon of reproof—they feel it, they know that you are in the right, they envy and respect you

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. v. 5.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 10.

inwardly; but then they cannot make up their minds to such a radical turn-over, such a terrible revolution in their established habits as an imitation of you would involve; they cannot bring themselves to forego and renounce their long-confirmed tastes, to break loose from old companionships, and brave ridicule: and so, since they do not mean to give up their own ways, the very sight of you chafes them; you tend to disturb their sham self-persuasion of "Peace, peace." Accordingly, if they could but detect some flaw in your character (however insignificant or even groundless),—if they could only lay to your charge some indiscretion in act or language, you may expect that these dupes of Satan would be right glad, and feel "Ah, ah! so would we have it!" Why? Because it would seem to palliate their own conscious wrong-doings, and help them to keep themselves and each other in countenance. Remember, then, that eyes are ever upon you—that the honour of religion is at stake in your persons. Be "blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke."<sup>1</sup> Let your worst enemy be able to find no occasion against you, except it be concerning the law of your God:<sup>2</sup> having a good conscience, that

<sup>1</sup> Philip. ii. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Dan. vi. 5.



whereas they speak evil of you as of evil-doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.”<sup>1</sup> At the same time, shrink not from boldly rebuking vice, when duty demands it of you. It is an unpleasant task; and in order to be beneficial, it must be done in a proper season and with tact. Let not your warmth of emotion hurry you into any imprudence of manner in doing it. Never enter upon it without sending a silent prayer upwards. Speak in a prayerful spirit, and a blessing will be more likely to attend what you say. For it is not enough that your solid consistency of character and known single-mindedness may be expected to impart weight to anything *you* may utter, which the same words from another’s mouth would not possess. Moreover, I need hardly tell you, that your preservation of this influence to yourselves depends altogether on the state of your “hidden man of the heart,” as to which there is no standing still. If you would not fall back, you must ceaselessly press forward.<sup>2</sup> But I have no need to urge you to this: for you cannot be truly thankful for the undeserved grace already bestowed upon you—you can have no loving perception of the beauty of holiness, without sincerely desiring

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. iii. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Philip. iii. 13.

that "as ye have received how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye may *abound* more and more."<sup>1</sup> Yes, and a further incentive surely must be, "that so an entrance may be ministered unto you *abundantly* into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ:"<sup>2</sup> joyfully knowing from the parable of the pounds,<sup>3</sup> and other parts of Scripture, that just as there will be various degrees of punishment for the condemned,<sup>4</sup> so will there be an equal disparity of rewards for the righteous; that just as one star differeth from another star in magnitude and lustre, so shall we be individually distinguished in the Resurrection. For apostles it may be reserved then to sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel;<sup>5</sup> still, as *our* work is, so shall *our* recompense be. We shall all of us be happy in heaven; and the measure of our happiness will, it would seem, be exactly proportioned to our capacity for heavenly happiness;—which capacity we increase by every advance in our spiritual progress, every accession to our proficiency in holiness here. Yes, dear friends, though, "as strangers and pilgrims,"<sup>6</sup> we be discouraged from indulging ambition with reference to this present

<sup>1</sup> 1 Thess. iv. 1.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Pet. i. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Luke, xix.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. x. 15; xi. 24; Luke, xii. 47.

<sup>5</sup> Matt. xix. 28.

<sup>6</sup> Heb. xi. 13.

world, you and I cannot be too aspiring as to our position in the world to come ; we cannot be too ambitious of the highest felicity open to redeemed sinners. With mutual fervent love, strive together, then, in this hallowed rivalry. Should you (as you certainly will sometimes) stumble or faint, be not disheartened ; persevere ; looking up afresh to Him who reminds you, as He once did Paul, "My strength is made perfect in weakness."<sup>1</sup> "The time is short ;"—let this thought at once console and spur you. Neglect no opportunity of getting good, or of doing good. Prove in your demeanor that religion is no mopish, pleasureless, gloomy thing, as many would have it. Show unflinchingly, and on all occasions, whose you are and whom you obey ; but make it equally evident that you are Christians of hearty choice, and not from slavish constraint of conscience, or fear of the consequences of transgression. By the cheerfulness of your piety, by your unruffled equanimity under all circumstances, by your generous and active sympathy, and your evidently disinterested kindness towards everybody, even the most froward and thankless, strive to win souls over to Christ. And finally, as to your family circumstances,—your domestic cares and

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. xii. 9.

crosses in this life,—it is not for *you* to be over-anxious; or, in any case whatever, to be found swallowed up of sorrow. “Be careful for nothing; but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”<sup>1</sup> *You* have a Refuge—an unfailing Refuge—a Refuge always at hand to run to, which none others have. With the eye of faith, *you* can see before you an end of this chequered condition of being, which none others can. You contemplate as awaiting you ere long (and how soon who shall say?) an inheritance prepared above the skies, which, once gained, shall be for ever, and the completeness of whose pure blessedness nothing shall interrupt. “Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven:” yea, and rejoice therefore that “the time is short.”

II. But they to whom I have just been speaking, are, alas! a “little flock,” here as everywhere. I will now turn to that comparatively numerous class of you, who have been aptly styled “borderers between the two kingdoms of God and Satan.”

<sup>1</sup> Philip. iv. 6, 7.

You have usually found your way up hither on a Sunday afternoon. Your appearance is to be ascribed maybe to the force of an almost mechanical habit. Had such of you been living in some northern county, instead of this south-western part of England, you would have frequented the morning service (if any) as *the* service of the day. And why? Because sovereign custom has established the rule thereabouts, that the morning congregation is always the larger. Verily, even in matters of religion, as church-going, how people *must* follow one another like sheep! and with what truth in relation to this, as well as most fashions of the world, do they acknowledge with their lips,—“We have erred and strayed from Thy ways, like lost sheep!” Now, let me ask you, Why do you come to church at all? Is it professedly in compliance with the Fourth Commandment? What, then, is the tenor of that Commandment? You hear it in church at least once in the course of a twelvemonth, as forming part of the first Lesson of our afternoon worship. Does God therein say, “Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath *afternoon*?” No more than He says, “Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath *morning*.” What He enjoins upon us is this,—“Remember that thou keep holy the *Sabbath day*.” And is one

whole day in every seven, consecrated throughout to Himself, more than He can reasonably require of us? Are fifty-two days out of the three hundred and sixty-five, too many to be devoted absolutely to the preparing for an endless condition of being in prospect? But, doubtless, others of you have as regularly performed your attendance at the afternoon service, in order to satisfy your consciences by the fulfilment of a stupid task. Others of you may have come up, as a somewhat dull variety, and way of "killing time" on a heavy day, if nothing more inviting turned up. And where, then, might you be found all Sunday forenoon? Seated by the corner of your cottage fire; or, chatting with a neighbour, leaning against the post of your door; or, maybe, sauntering lazily about the fields in your common clothes. The truth is, that you have had no real relish for the things of religion: and so have contrived to believe (little suspecting *who* furnished you with your arguments), that there was no occasion for a man to trouble himself on such a subject more than he liked, whatever a few weak enthusiasts in the place might preach or feel; that if *they* chose to be worked up, their life long, into a fright as to what will become of them hereafter, *you* at least had more sense than to make yourself uncomfortable, or bring down on your head the jeers of

your neighbours, by showing yourself righteous overmuch : all of those living about you, with scarcely an exception (most decent people, too), thought going off to church once a-day (and that not always) quite enough ; and you considered that you should be pretty safe if you ran only the same risk as they ; that as to what *I* might say, it was of little weight, for it was my business, and it was only to be expected that I should so talk ; that you always honestly “ paid your way ;” and that it is not for such as you that hell is prepared ; that God is merciful, not One extreme to mark what is done amiss ; that the *scandalously wicked* may, perhaps, have no well-grounded hopes (so long as they *continue* in that state), but that, as for all others, we have only to keep from gross crime ; not to deny what is written in the Bible ; and as life draws near its close (and no more good is to be got out of the world) to turn round to God, and tell Him how very sorry we are, if we have in times past displeased Him,—and all will be well. We may be quite easy,—we shall be accepted.<sup>1</sup>

Now, truly, this is a very comfortable persuasion, a doctrine peculiarly agreeable to one’s indolence. But the important question is,—Is it

<sup>1</sup> Note H.

a view which may be safely acted upon? You recollect what Solomon says,—“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death.”<sup>1</sup> Can you, I would ask, while thus living, and thus spending every Lord’s day, have been loving the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind,—which is the first and great commandment?<sup>2</sup> Can you have been absolutely “hungering and thirsting after righteousness?”<sup>3</sup> Is this to have been “working out your own salvation with fear and trembling?”<sup>4</sup> In what sense can you have been “presenting your body, a living sacrifice, to God?”<sup>5</sup> After what fashion have you “crucified your flesh, with its affections and lusts?”<sup>6</sup> Are you an example of what Christ meant when He spoke of every man who claimed to be His disciple, “denying himself, and taking up the cross daily?”<sup>7</sup> In short, can we, by any stretch of charity, suppose that whilst living as you have been, you have held as utterly indifferent the very dearest earthly objects of your affection, in comparison with the Saviour of your soul?<sup>8</sup> There can be little doubt that your free-and-easy manner of passing the last five years

<sup>1</sup> Prov. xiv. 12.<sup>2</sup> Matt. xxii. 37, 38.<sup>3</sup> Matt. v. 6.<sup>4</sup> Philip. ii. 12.<sup>5</sup> Rom. xii. 1.<sup>6</sup> Gal. v. 24.<sup>7</sup> Matt. xvi. 24.<sup>8</sup> Luke, xiv. 26.



has quite satisfied God, such as you choose to imagine Him. But would it not be more worthy of a rational being to ascertain, how the God of the Bible has been looking upon you the while? Had He not permitted you to see the beginning of this year 1858, *where* would you have been *now*? I will suppose you a quiet, orderly man; not one of the many who know no higher pleasures than those of a pig: who glory most in drinking themselves drunken in an atmosphere of tobacco, and amid bellowings as of caged maniacs. No: *you*, I will suppose, can find little gratification in such scenes; you are not coarse enough in your taste to find enjoyment in hours of such sottish, selfish excess. You are not disposed, for any such equivalent, to transfer one-third, or perhaps two-thirds of your hard-gotten wages into the pockets of others, who would be too glad to profit by your loss. You prefer reserving the whole of what you earn, for your wife and children; and you are well satisfied with yourself as one who never harms anybody.<sup>1</sup> Be it so, that you are seldom or never seen otherwise than quite sober; and that you not often are guilty of very violent language. But do you never join, and join heartily, in backbiting another?

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xiii. 10.

And are you doing such an one no harm, in thus helping to render him offensive or ridiculous in the esteem of his fellows,—and that without his being able to vindicate himself? You never, of set purpose, dissuade with your mouth any one from attending church. Be it so: but by your example in not being seen at church yourself on a Sunday forenoon, have you not tacitly been expressing your defiance of the God of the Sabbath? And have you not been strengthening others (to the extent of your influence) in their like profanation of it? And if, in consequence of being thus strengthened by you, they fail to hear some Sunday morning sermon, whereby they might, through grace, have been pricked, and so their consciences are at this moment left dead, and their salvation less possible, can you still pride yourself on doing nobody any harm? Again, your children, or part of them, have been sent neat and regular to the Sunday school. Well; wiser for their interests than for your own, you have in this been doing them good. Still, have you not at the same time done them a moral injury almost sufficient to counterbalance that good? When your little ones have quitted your roof for school and church on a bright still Sabbath morning, leaving yourself, perhaps, in bed, and your wife evidently about to be engaged in household

matters, they well knowing that neither of you their parents will they see at church ; is it not likely that, as their minds open, they will begin to ask themselves,—“ If attendance *twice* on public worship be really *our* duty as we are taught ; how is it that our fathers and mothers, and nearly all other mature persons in the village, appear to account *one* attendance (and not always even one) enough for *them* ? ” Have you not been instructing them, that you consider that there is an easier measure of religious obligation for grown-up men and women than for children ? And will they not, as soon as they leave school, be more likely to regulate their conduct by what they see in you, their natural guides and models, than by the more rigid standard set before them by their teachers and myself ? “ And even if they do so (you may be inwardly replying), provided they grow up dutiful and well-behaved, giving me no trouble, they may go twice to church, or they may go once ; they may act in such matters as they please : I shall deem it to be no business of mine to interfere.” Do you, then, expect that you, your children, or any of your neighbours, shall gain admittance into heaven when you or they die, without having fulfilled the ordained and absolute conditions of the Gospel covenant ? What those

conditions are, you must know well enough (even though you may be unable to read), if only you have attended to what you have heard within these walls on Sunday afternoons. The arbour-like aspect of this sacred building reminds us of One who was as lately born unto us a Saviour: and I would be the last to deny, that in Him “mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.”<sup>1</sup> But, believe me, that, notwithstanding our heavenly Father’s tenderness and readiness to forgive, as revealed in Christ, His awful attribute of perfect justice exists as fully as ever: broad and precious as are His promises to us,—promises worthy of a love, into whose blessed mysteries the very angels adoringly long to fathom,—His righteous denunciations are nevertheless recorded with equal clearness. He is now as He was in Moses’s days, “the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin; (yes, but what is added?) and that will by no means clear the guilty.”<sup>2</sup> Consistently with this description, in the New Testament we find God the Son assuring us, if faithful, of “life eternal;”

<sup>1</sup> Ps. lxxxv. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.

but do we not as frequently hear Him warning men?—admonishing such as you, for instance, by the parable of the king's wedding-feast, to beware lest you one day be cast into outer darkness, where shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth; and so your feelings through eternity be like those of the invited guest, who, by reason of mere presumptuous neglect on his part, found himself shut out from the brilliancy, gaiety, and plenty, of the banqueting room?<sup>1</sup> “Your feelings, *like his*,” I say; but, oh! inconceivably aggravated:—utter hopeless remorse for your mad forfeiture of that bliss among the saints in light, which might have been yours for ever! Might it not seem enough to goad such of you out of your apathy to be reminded from His lips, that it were wiser to tear yourself off from every forbidden habit or taste,—though as much part of you, as indispensable to your existence, as your right eye, hand, or foot,—“than to be cast into hell-fire, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched?”<sup>2</sup> Herein He depicts for you the same anguish of an ever-gnawing conscience, the same experience of the full fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God, under a metaphor taken from a

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxii. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Mark, ix. 43–48.

receptacle of offal outside Jerusalem, for the consuming of which a smouldering fire was constantly kept burning. Doubtless the passage just alluded to has been so familiar to you from childhood, that many and many a time it has fallen upon your ears as an oft-told tale; nay, even possibly a harmless bugbear. But as truly as the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth, and the Bible is His own revelation of Himself, the words of which this passage is composed, faintly shadow forth a terrible reality,—a reality, too, so probably in prospect of each one of you whom at this moment I specially address, that its import you would do well to understand in time. We may perhaps best illustrate it, by supposing it literally interpreted. Suppose, then, a worm were now eating away into your vitals. The pain will of itself have soon worn out your utmost endurance. But whilst writhing under it, suppose your finger taken and put within the flame of a candle. Suppose it to be held there but for a few seconds. Could you depict to us what you would have undergone during those few seconds,—from the picking and biting worm, and the burning of the tip of your finger, together? Imagine yourself, nevertheless, required to bear these two distinct pains, and without intermission, night or day, for a whole week,—from the present hour until next

Sunday at the same hour. You could not bear them. Ere to-morrow's dawn, you would have sunk from exhaustion through agony, into the insensibility of death. But yet (let not Satan deceive you), it is a certain fact appalling to contemplate, that the faculties of mind and body, with which you and I shall find ourselves endowed, when the blast of the archangel shall call us from our graves, will enable us to endure this,—aye, aggravated to an infinite intensity; and not for a week only, or a twelvemonth, or twenty years, but throughout eternity, without hope of so much as a momentary relief, even at the termination of a million of centuries! Now, my friends, some of you to whom I am thus speaking, I daresay, deem me most unjustified in so much as hinting the probability of any such doom being ever yours. Far be it from me, your fellow-sinner, to pre-condemn you. At the same time it behoves me to recollect, that I am accountable for all I say to you, and to take good heed that the blood of no one of you be, in any degree, required at my hands.<sup>1</sup> I assure you in all sincerity, that I wish not to represent the gate of salvation narrower than it is, in order to indulge any personal feeling, or to give

<sup>1</sup> Ezek. iii. 17, 18, 19.

point to my discourse. Bring all I have just uttered to that one and the same touchstone, by which you and myself shall be tried; and, in particular, let me recommend you to ponder those words of our future Judge in Revelation, iii. 15, 16; and fairly and impartially to consider, whether or not they seem, in any measure, applicable to yourself; "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth." You have heard these words before. You knew them to be in your Bible. You have never professed to disbelieve them. No; you have only seconded Satan in blinding you to them. You deliberately prefer to remain lulled in a false confidence. The trader, with bankruptcy impending, may, by drugging his intellect, fancy himself solvent. But the self-illusion does not better his affairs. By God's help bestir yourselves. Tear off from your eyes every film of fond prejudice, and dare to look in the face your actual condition. Better far to do it now yourselves, than to let it be done for you by him who is beguiling you. Arouse you, and turn heartily to your only Hope. Would that, on this my last occasion of addressing you, I could only induce you to employ about religion that



common sense which you can bring to any other subject. Act in the care of your souls, (for are they not worth it?) as you do about anything, in respect of which you are in earnest. "Use *all diligence* to make your calling and election sure."<sup>1</sup> "*Strive* to enter in at the *strait* gate."<sup>2</sup> The length of opportunity which may yet remain to you for so doing, is known only in the Divine counsels,—is to you, uncertain. Yea, at longest, "the time is short."

III. But there are others of you who have appeared only at the afternoon service, because disowning your membership with the National Church, into which you were in infancy solemnly admitted at baptism, and into which you are careful that your own little ones are baptized. You may have usually been found, then, on a Sabbath morning at your own place of worship. Am I indeed to infer this? Or am I rightly informed that very few of you have deemed it worth while to go even there? Now although reckoning myself comparatively little accountable for the condition of *your* souls, permit me to ask, Can you show me, on your own religious principles, that the way in which most of you pass a Sunday forenoon, is right?

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. i. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Luke, xiii. 24.

Receive as applicable to some of yourselves the arguments, which I have just been urging upon others. Receive them as from a sincere well-wisher, though one whose claim you have not acknowledged as the authorized ambassador of Christ to you. And *why* have you not so acknowledged me? Can you allege any better reason than that you were trained up to Methodism? Far be it from me (even in wish) to deny any fellow-man his inalienable right to unlimited liberty of conscience as to his religious creed: but you will agree with me when I say, that though not in any degree accountable to man in this matter, we are deeply so to God, who sees into our hidden springs of action, and knows perfectly whether or not we strive, according to our opportunities and abilities—simply, prayerfully strive—to ascertain the way in which He would have us walk; and whether or not we make it our daily endeavour to live up to the light which we possess. Let me, as one who may never see you again in this world, put a few questions to each of you. Can you tell me in what the teaching of the National Church differs from that of Dr. Wesley? Can you mention any particular tenet which the Church of England holds, but to which your conscience will not permit you to subscribe? Have you ever

taken much trouble to ascertain, whether there be anything so unscriptural in the doctrines of the Church into which you were baptized, as to justify you in becoming and continuing one of a distinct body of worshippers? Have you ever made it a topic of serious reflection, whether you may not all along, without proper thought, have been helping to keep up a needless division in a community of fellow-Christians? Have you ever calmly considered, whether in being a separatist you have not been led by the influence of others ;—perhaps governed by the example of your parents, or, at any rate, guided by some natural feeling, rather than acting upon any deliberately, impartially-formed conviction resulting from a study of your Bible?

The cause which furnished to Methodism its only semblance of justification, no longer exists. Methodism originated at a period when the Church of the Reformation exhibited little better than the corpse of its former self. The light which its martyr-bishop fondly hoped would never be put out, had become well-nigh extinct. It was a death-like slumber of unconcern pervading the length and breadth of the land, which stirred the spirit of your founder, then a young man at Oxford. From a small commencement, the assemblings of a few

like-minded with himself for social prayer, his zeal impelled him to enter upon a course of labours which, up to a certain point, were undoubtedly most needed and most useful. But it may, I think, be safely asserted, that had he lived within the last twenty years instead of a century ago, Wesleyanism would have been unheard of. If, as I would fain believe (despite his chief biographer), Wesley's untiring efforts in the rekindling of Gospel religion were not, even unconsciously, instigated by love of personal pre-eminence, but simply by love of Christ, he would have rejoiced to see in that Church, of which he was an ordained minister, a vitality and an energy of faith which, in many a parish, may well be put in comparison with what was seen in the early days of Christianity.

Let me beg of you to cast yourself upon Him who is to be our common Judge, to clear your mind from every taint of bias or prejudice, and to enable you to discern truly, whether it be on sound and sufficient grounds you have gone out from us since your baptism,—whether your separation be thoroughly acceptable in His sight. I am sure that in what I now recommend, I am desiring of you nothing more than what you must admit to be a reasonable duty on your part. Indeed, I venture to affirm that there must be something wrong at

bottom, there must be some carnal motive secretly at work in the breast of any one of you, who shall neglect the setting about such an investigation. I am, in short, only advising you to act as I am anxious to act myself. Convince me that I am essentially wrong in opinion on religion, and that you are altogether right, and you will soon find me enrolled among your number. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."<sup>1</sup> I cannot think that any of you will accuse me of a spirit of bigotry. At least, I have not put it in the power of any of you to lay to my charge the avowal of any sentiment, open to comparison with what was addressed a while ago to one of our communicants. On being asked by a person whom he accidentally met in a mutual friend's cottage, what place of worship he attended, he at once mildly answered, "Clandown Church." "Clandown Church!" exclaimed the person referred to, with much warmth; "then you are most surely going to hell. All who follow Church ministers, go to hell." Such was the sentiment uttered by one of your own body residing in this parish. Had I expressed it, I could not have blamed you if you had denounced me as intolerant; but I am thankful to know that you cannot call to

<sup>1</sup> Romans, xiv. 5.

remembrance against me any words so little in unison with that charity which "hopeth all things, believeth all things,"<sup>1</sup> language savouring so strongly of the animus of Popery. At the same time, though I deprecate prejudice even in behalf of what I consider right (especially when accompanied with bitterness), I have always inculcated a rational measure of decision in your religious views. I am not latitudinarian enough to sympathise with some of you in your notion, that "it matters not *where* we go, provided we get good;" and I hold those persons to be culpably inconsistent who, on a Sunday morning, can join with all becoming seriousness in offering up that petition of our Litany, "From all false doctrine, heresy, and *schism*, Good Lord deliver us;" and in the evening of the very same day, may be seen openly encouraging schism, by their presence at the worship of those who are not in union with the Church. All this I conceive to be not at all incompatible with a truly Catholic spirit, nor irreconcilable with partaking in the Apostle's wish, "Peace be to all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."<sup>2</sup> I myself feel assured that in every religious body who hold the one Head—even Christ,—there are

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xiii. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Eph. vi. 24.

to be found those in whom the Holy Spirit dwells, —those who live lives which they could not live by their own unassisted will. Such among us as are sterling believers, whether we be members of the Church or Nonconformists, greet a brother or a sister in every one whom we see, by their evidences of grace, that our common Father accepts. But not all of us, whether Churchmen or Dissenters, are single-hearted, heaven-devoted believers; and those religionists who are not, view with more or less dislike—nay, too often with malignity—all others who presume to think differently from themselves. How strange, yet notorious, that the keenest of all animosities among men are stirred up by differing interpretations of the Gospel of peace—of the revelation of the God of love! There was once a period when it was a common remark of the heathen respecting the then comparatively few believers in Jesus, “See how these Christians love one another!” Would there be any appropriateness in such a remark nowadays? Would not “See how these Christians *hate* one another!” be nearer the truth?

That the primitive characteristic of those who bear the name of Christ, should have become so reversed, is deplorable enough. I am sure that there is no one really imbued with the Spirit of

Christ, who does not desire to see more unity among all who trust in the same Saviour, and look forward to the same heaven. *Outward uniformity*, of course, is what is wanted in order to do away with that antagonistic rivalry which is the consequence of our outward divisions. Is it possible then to bring it about? At any rate, can anything be done to promote it? Can you do anything? Yes; no elaborate scheme is required to be devised for this purpose. One is provided already. A Church has been long established among us, legally invested with certain privileges as the national form of religion. Through the instrumentality of its admirable parochial system, embracing the length and breadth of the land, the most out-of-the-way districts are blessed week by week with the tidings of salvation, whose inhabitants might otherwise have perished "for lack of knowledge;" so that scarcely a hamlet can you visit from Cornwall to Cumberland, which does not rear its spire, or tower, or belfry, indicating provision for God's public worship, the regular preaching of His Word, and the due administration of His Sacraments. It is, I need hardly remind you, in connexion with, and in consequence of, the parochial system, that you have this commodious house of God, and a resident authorized pastor.



Now methinks that you can scarcely feel to have any insuperable cause of dissatisfaction with the teaching here delivered, or the prayers and praises here offered; otherwise, so many of you would not usually be seen amongst us every Sabbath afternoon. Why then should you not make this your *only* place of worship?—why divide your attendance between this and any other? If you agree with the Established Church (the Church into which yourselves and your children have been baptized) in *essentials*, oh! that you could make up your minds to sacrifice somewhat of mere natural feeling or of acquired bias, for the promotion, as far as in you lay, of the grand, the Divine, object of more general union among Christians! I have said “Divine object.” How conclusive on this point, how touchingly impressive, are those words of the Saviour—His most affectionate, His most solemn, and well-nigh His last!—“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me.”<sup>1</sup> But it may be objected, that the unity which Jesus here

<sup>1</sup> John, xvii. 20, 21.

so desires, is union in love, in heart, and in aim ; that provided there be *this* union, it is a matter of perfect indifference in His sight, whether or not outwardly, and in our forms of worship, we agree. But how is such an interpretation to be reconciled with what St. Paul (an inspired apostle of His) prays for the believers at Rome, “that ye may with one mind and one *mouth* glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ?”<sup>1</sup> If, then, all of you in Clandown are to worship God “with one *mouth*,” I myself do not see how you can do so, except by worshipping in the same words. If this view of the apostle’s meaning be correct, either, my friends, you ought all of you to worship together in the Wesleyan chapel, and join in the extempore prayer there offered ; or you ought to assemble together here in church, where the worship is conducted according to a printed form. You will not for a moment doubt in which of the two places I, as a minister of the Church of England, would desire to hear of all of you worshipping together. You would (and rightly so) consider me very inconsistent, if not insincere, were I to scruple in declaring it as my conscientious conviction, that all of you ought to worship according to the Book

<sup>1</sup> Romans, xv. 6.

of Common Prayer. In the Church of England I myself recognise the one kind of ecclesiastical constitution traceable in the New Testament. Therein we find mention of three orders of ministers: first, bishops or overseers; secondly, elders, presbyters, or priests; thirdly, deacons:—the respective functions of these three orders being distinctly ascertainable from the Acts and Epistles. This system established by the apostles under the direction of God's Spirit, and by them deemed best for the extension and edification of the Church in the first age of the Gospel, I cannot think it lawful for uninspired men in these days lightly to supersede or abolish. I know, moreover, that stated pre-composed forms of prayer have been used in the Church of Christ from the earliest times. I know that many of the prayers which we use in our Sunday worship, were offered up almost as long ago as the Apostolic age; and I am persuaded in my own mind that for comprehensiveness, appropriateness, and spirituality, they are all that a needy, penitent sinner can require to guide his devotion; and that he will feel this to be their character, in proportion as his own heart is in a hallowed frame, and in tune for heavenly employments.

My friends, I need hardly assure you that I

have advanced these remarks to you, not as a sectarian zealot bent solely on enlisting as many as possible around his party standard : I can be actuated by no such low and impure motive, when no longer personally connected with you. I have not been urging these observations under a notion, that not one of you must ever hope for God's favour, or heaven at last, unless you agree with me in my own convictions. I offer them to you as men and women, whom I have had the pleasure of knowing as good and civil neighbours, in hope of your giving them your prayerful, candid consideration : being on a subject which both you and myself feel to be of paramount importance.

IV. But during my ministry among you, besides habitual afternoon-comers, I have noticed occasional comers. A vagrant curiosity no doubt instigated one or more of you to visit us. You wished to see what was going on within this building on Sundays. Your curiosity was soon satisfied. The whole proceedings seemed each week more tame, stale, and wearisome, till you bent your steps homeward from us for the last time. May you be brought (and the sooner the better) to discern, that the dullness was in yourselves ; and that a Volume, into which you probably seldom or never look from year to year, explains all in a short sentence ;—

“The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God : for they are foolishness unto him.”<sup>1</sup> Ah ! each of you must be well aware, that you have a season in prospect, when that very Word of Life which you have found so insipid, and turned your backs upon, must supply your heart’s comfort and support,—if it is then to have any. You have your dying hour before you. Every year you go through the particular month in which it is to happen : the very day of that month passes over your head, though you know it not. It is hard, very hard, to feel, to realize the fact, that we must one day die. But so it is. You yourself (that is to say, the body in which you are there at this moment breathing,) will sooner or later be brought slowly up hither on the shoulders of others ; a line of your relatives and neighbours in sable attire, and two abreast, following after you :—some exhibiting felt grief for your removal, but the rest manifestly more or less indifferent, as though the sad ceremonial in which they shall be taking part, were not to be repeated for themselves. Encased in wood, cold and unconscious, you will rest awhile on two stools before yon door : thence the minister of this church will precede you down the slope outside to a narrow

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. ii. 14.

oblong hole dug out for your reception. At its bottom you will be placed ; the service over you be concluded ; the little assembly return to their homes ; and that afternoon's proceedings fade away from memory, as the circling ripples of a pool. To tell you such undeniable truisms, may seem puerile. But, at any rate, these two questions are far from puerile ;—Do you practically believe that what has been described, will happen to yourself ? and, when it shall be so happening, where will your spirit be ?

Others of you have found your way up to this church for a time, and to listen to the Gospel, certainly ; for you came just to see how the clergyman would perform his part ; to pass your judgment on the sermon which he might give ; you were modern counterparts of those Jews of whom we read in the book of Ezekiel, where one man is represented as saying to another, “Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the Lord. And (saith the Almighty to His prophet) they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them : for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.”<sup>1</sup> So long as

<sup>1</sup> Ezek. xxxiii. 30, 31.

the preacher kept up to a certain point of attractiveness, public worship was attended with very becoming seriousness ; but should he once or twice have failed in this (discoursing perhaps on some subject not of an exciting character), the next Sunday, and perhaps many a following Sunday, found your seat empty, till, in fact, your presence had ceased to be expected ; thus proving to us beyond mistake, that it was passing gratification you sought in coming, blended possibly with a certain self-complacent sense of performing at the same time a felt duty. May honest gratitude to God, and a desire of practical benefit to your soul, be henceforward the sole actuating motive of your attendance ! and may this motive, through grace, prove strong enough to render that attendance constant and devout—an attendance too sincerely pure in its object, to be influenced by the inevitable fluctuations of a frail fellow-man's powers of utterance ! May you learn that a love of freshness in the sermons you hear, is no proof of a desire to know the worst of yourself ; that a craving after pulpit excitement is no demonstration of deep-felt genuine religion in the heart ; that it is a mark of nothing more than a thoroughly worldly spirit, only in a religious guise !

Others of you have come for a time, and then

indignantly ceased, the cause of offence in your case too closely resembling that of the king of Israel in regard to Micaiah,—“ I hate him (said Ahab) ; for he doth not speak good concerning me, but evil.”<sup>1</sup> May any such of you in future act the part of wise men, and in a spirit of candour endeavour to ascertain, whether statements here made, whenever more plain than pleasant, are indeed true in fact, or as false as you may wish to think them ! May you ere long become sensible, that although “ whatsoever is not read in Holy Scripture, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation ;”<sup>2</sup>—yet that if what is here spoken, coincide with what is there written, the words uttered from the pulpit of this rustic sanctuary are as virtually a message from the great God Himself to your soul, as though you received them from the lips of an angelic herald, direct from His presence-chamber on high !

Or, again, petrel-like, you may have resorted hither for a while from a storm of affliction. You were yourself in full work, your rising family healthy and promising ; and well contented with the little world of self within which your sympathies were

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings, xxii. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Article VI.



really confined, you were inwardly thinking—"To-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant;"<sup>1</sup> when lo! the quiet security of your Laish-like,<sup>2</sup> irreligious dwelling, was broken in upon by messengers from a forgotten Providence. Accident befell yourself, and subjected you to weeks of pain and alarm; or sent home to you the corpse of a favourite boy; or, one dearer still, in whose life your own life seemed bound up, sickened, sank, and died. You felt that verily there existed One stronger than you. Right humbly you would betake yourself to God, yea, live for heaven. You gladdened us by your appearance at church. We trusted that haply you had been brought to a right mind. But, alas! this continued only just so long as you quivered from the blow. With your agitation of feelings, the moral effects wore off. A few weeks passed over, and your presence was sought entirely in vain. Conviction had proved in your case (as with how many!) to be not necessarily conversion: and so it "happened unto you according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire."<sup>3</sup> You had conceived that most certainly you were repentant, if ever

<sup>1</sup> Isa. lvi. 12.<sup>2</sup> Judg. xviii. 27.<sup>3</sup> 2 Pet. ii. 22.

sinner was ; but where are now your “works meet for repentance?” where are now those resolves of the season of affliction—resolves so devoutly formed, that you would have resented the faintest suspicion breathed as to their genuineness? Alas! your religion proved to be only that of Israel in the desert ;—“When He slew them, then they sought Him : and they returned and enquired early after God. And they remembered that God was their Rock, and the High God their Redeemer. Nevertheless they did flatter Him with their mouth, and they lied unto Him with their tongues. For their heart was not right with Him ; neither were they steadfast in His covenant.”<sup>1</sup>

Oh ! the suicidal infatuation of thus trifling with One who has but to speak the word, and, in a moment of time, this globe would be without a surviving inhabitant ! Have you discovered indubitably, that your change in sentiments and practice, during those few weeks, was a foolish mistake ? If you entertain any such thought, believe me that you have too much reason to fear, that your visitation, designed by Him who sent it as a blessing, has been converted by you into a curse ; and that the evil spirit who before possessed you, has

<sup>1</sup> Ps. lxxviii. 34-37.

returned to your heart with seven other spirits more wicked than himself.<sup>1</sup> And shall he indeed “dwell there?” Have you at no time been awestruck by an example confirmatory of the truth of Solomon’s remark,—“He, that being often reprov’d, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy?”<sup>2</sup> Cry mightily unto God; renouncing all trust in the best resolves, made in the strength of poor fallen human nature. In this lies your only possible chance of safety. You may yet be found sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in your right mind.<sup>3</sup> Should you, however, still die in your sins, you will not be able to plead lack of warning from me.

V. But there are, alas! others of you (and I fear I must say the most numerous class), to whom it is my bounden duty to offer a few words, thinking it quite possible that some even of *you* may have chosen to-day to direct your footsteps to the house of God. You whom I now address, are the most degraded class in my late charge. By “most degraded,” I do not, of course, mean poorest (for some of you are not poor), I mean, that you are simply baptized heathen. You have been born, and are dwelling, it is true, in a country where the

<sup>1</sup> Luke, xi. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Prov. xxix. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Luke, viii. 35.

Saviour of mankind has been known, and temples of Christian worship established, more than fifteen hundred years ; still, here are you passing your allotted term,—passing your few uncertain years of probation—years once gone, gone for ever,—almost as you would have done, had you been inhabitants of some region where the foot of a missionary had never yet penetrated. Oh ! would that you had only the responsibilities of the heathen ! Would that you as much practically acknowledged the existence of a Supreme Being as many of the heathen ! Would that you copied the heathen in their desire to please their gods ! These expressions of mine you are inwardly resenting as unwarrantably harsh. “We are Christians,” you will tell me, “and probably as good Christians as many of your fussy pietists, and self-important professors.” You *are* Christians nominally ; but I appeal to your several consciences : in your secret hearts, do you not deem yourselves independent of every one, even of the most High Himself,—they perhaps excepted from whom you get your living ? Do you not reckon this feeling of would-be independence proper manly spirit ? “Hear, O heavens ! and give ear, O earth ! for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner,

and the ass his master's crib : but Israel doth not know, my people doth not *consider*.”<sup>1</sup> Oh ! that your being brought to church on this occasion may be blessed to make you *think* ! Is your practical ignoring of the Almighty's claims upon you consistent with common sense ? If you and I had made ourselves, we should have had an indisputable right to act in everything as we please ; but having each one of us been formed in the womb by an unseen Hand, and made male or female, not by virtue of any choice or consciousness in the matter of her who bare us, but entirely as our Maker Himself saw fit,—we are surely the actual property of Him who so formed us ; even as when a potter moulds either a cup or plate (whichsoever he desires) out of a lump of clay, such cup or plate clearly belongs to that potter, to be employed in any way that he thinks right. And for what purpose can you suppose yourself to have been formed ? Contemplate the beautiful symmetry of that body of yours, the complete suitableness of the position of each member and part—make yourself acquainted, in ever so superficial a degree, with the exquisite contrivances resorted to, the variety of materials employed, the diversity of chemical pro-

<sup>1</sup> Isa. i. 2, 3.

cesses going on day and night unceasingly, in that astonishing piece of machinery of which your body is the outer case ; and especially consider that mysterious power inherent in you of thinking, reasoning, remembering :—and can you imagine that the only object of life, intended for a being so endowed, is to use his every faculty in the indulgence of self, and to follow his own inclinations, totally regardless and unmindful of the kind Author of his existence? Oh! never vaunt, “ I shall do as I please.” Never entertain the notion of your being free and independent agents, so long as you cannot move a limb, except as Another permits and enables you. A block of stone or wood, chiselled exactly into the shape of yourself, when standing would not remain erect for an instant ; what is it, then, which enables *you* to stand? What is it which keeps your blood warm, as it runs without a moment’s intermission, night or day, to the extremities of your feet, and up again through your body along the minute canals provided for it? Whence is it that whereas your several limbs and brain become fatigued by exertion, your heart and lungs never tire? Whence is it that these continue beating in regular movement during your sleeping no less than your waking hours? Does all this proceed within you of your own mere volition? It goes on, though you be

wholly unthinking or unconscious of it. There is a Power quite independent of yourself, then, attending to this your interior economy. There is an unseen Hand about you wherever you go, whatever you be doing;—the hand of One who, by a thought, may at any moment, stiffen you in death, and consign you where “the smoke of your torment shall ascend up for ever and ever.”<sup>1</sup> And why does He not so? Why is it that your breath is thus continued to you, despite your day by day thankless contempt of your Preserver? Certainly He can derive no possible benefit to Himself in thus keeping you in life—an annoyance and offence to Him. Oh! “despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds.”<sup>2</sup> On that day—the great and terrible day of final assize—it is probable that you and I shall next meet. Enthroned amid the grand resplendent clouds, a human Form arrayed in the ineffable glory of the Godhead—your eyes and

<sup>1</sup> Rev. xiv. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. ii. 4, 5, 6.

mine shall be looking upon Jesus, *now* our *Saviour*, *then* our *Judge*! All the celestial hierarchy shall be there—innumerable angels shall crowd the skies from their bright abodes in bliss; all the prophets and apostles shall be there; the martyrs and saints of every age, the myriads who have breathed the breath of life from the beginning to the end of time, shall be there. Imagine your own trial for Eternity to have come. Are you, in any sense, preparing for it? Believe me, every chapter of the Old or New Testament read during the past five years from that desk—every prayer offered up—every hymn of praise sung in this church—every sermon which you might have heard from my lips, but neglected to hear—shall, in that hour, witness against you. And what will you be able to urge on your own behalf? The entire assembled universe are mute to listen! You remain speechless.—“Depart from me, thou cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!”<sup>1</sup> But no; the overwhelming spectacle is not yet before our eyes. You are not yet summoned to present yourself before that awful Bar. Still (difficult as it may be to realize the fact), if it be certain that you have one day to pass the ordeal of such a Court—as certain as that you have been born into this world a child

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxv. 41.



of Adam,—what is the most prudent advice that I can give you, or myself adopt (for I do not forget that, with heavier responsibilities than yours, I shall be called to appear in my turn)? Why, begin at once to prepare for an occasion of such incomparable consequence to you. Make rigid use of the present time (“the time is short!”), in getting ready your case. Leave no means unemployed which may possibly serve to promote your acquittal. Suppose that you had committed some grievous crime—perhaps murder itself,—and knew that you were perfectly sure of detection: in your alarm at your situation, you would cast about in your mind by what imaginable means you could possibly escape the vengeance of the law, when brought to trial. Suppose, when at your wits’ end, you heard of a very eminent barrister who had got clear off hundreds as bad as yourself; who, moreover, required no fee, provided any guilty party applied in person to him, kept nothing back from him, were bitterly sorry for what they had done, and honestly resolved on amendment. In such case, you would not, most certainly, lose one precious moment in betaking yourself to that barrister, and securing his help;—yea, even though it should cost you the last article of furniture in your house, and the last rag of clothes on your back. Well, none of you have perpetrated any offence subjecting you

to death at the hands of man. But the trial to which you have really to look forward, is one for eternal life or eternal death ; and have you not times without number—have you not this very day, been committing sins incurring “the second death?”<sup>1</sup> Do you feel, then, at this instant, the faintest emotion akin to “what must I do to be saved?”<sup>2</sup> Do you ask with *any* degree of sincerity, who shall be found to plead your cause for you? “If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous ; and He is the propitiation for our sins.”<sup>3</sup> Will you seek His mediation now while you can, or not? Remember that every sin that you ever committed, intended, or conceived, is known ; your detection is certain, for it has already taken place ; and your apprehension may at any hour. Oh ! then, look up above this polluted rebel world, and, with the eye of faith, pierce through the intervening canopy of cloud, and behold Him whom your manifold iniquities and mine once brought down to Calvary, even now standing at the right hand of the Majesty on high ; still exhibiting indeed those nail-prints and that spear-wound which our transgressions then inflicted, but graciously declaring for our encouragement and

<sup>1</sup> Rev. xx. 14.<sup>2</sup> Acts, xvi. 30.<sup>3</sup> 1 John, ii. 1, 2.

assurance, "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out."<sup>1</sup> "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth."<sup>2</sup>

But, alas ! are not some of you callous to all this? "Hearing, you hear, and do not understand; seeing you see, and do not perceive: for your hearts are waxed gross, and your ears are dull of hearing, and your eyes you have closed; lest you should see with your eyes, and hear with your ears, and understand with your hearts, and should be converted and healed."<sup>3</sup> Do such of you believe in any state after death? or, rather I would say, can you possibly be persuaded that that Book is anything more than a fiction which affirms, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God?"<sup>4</sup> How would any one of you deal with a man who acted towards you, as you have been habitually treating God? Or, suppose some neighbour of yours to have an excellent employer, who gives him good wages, and has promised him, if he will only be industrious and conduct himself properly, an ample pension when he shall be no longer able to work. Suppose this man to know that he is expected to give his attendance, during one day of each week, in the office of his

<sup>1</sup> John, vi. 37.    <sup>2</sup> Isa. xlv. 22.    <sup>3</sup> Acts, xxviii. 26, 27; Isa. vi. 9, 10.

<sup>4</sup> Ps. ix. 17 (Prayer Book Version).

employer; and be occupied in business with the employer himself. Suppose him, knowing all this, to reflect thus: "I find this master of mine a wonderfully good-natured, indulgent man; I don't think that he could bring himself to turn me off, whatever I did. I shall get my wages and the pension to boot just as well, whether I labour for him or not." Suppose him accordingly seldom or never to present himself at the office on the appointed day of the week; and, indeed, on every other day, instead of trying to please his master, never giving that master a moment's thought, but going off anywhere, and doing anything which best suited his own humour; and not only so, but perhaps jeering and ridiculing any of his fellow-workmen who will not consent to act like himself, and seem bent on scrupulously and faithfully performing their duties, and giving their master satisfaction. What would you say of such a man? Would you not say, that though he may just now brag of his spirit of independence, and deem himself a fine fellow, he is in truth destitute of a common-sense regard for his own interests, and will most certainly have to rue his folly; for that, some day, when least expecting it, he will find himself discharged, and that without a character?

But is this imaginary case at all an exaggerated picture of the way, in which you are acting from

year to year towards God? Throughout the day, you seldom or never think what He would have you do; and on that special day of the week when He requires you to come before Him in this His house of prayer, and to spend a few hours in communion with Himself, He expects you here in vain. What care you for Him or His Sabbath? There can be no doubt, that if non-attendance on the ordinances of public worship were a sin still punished by law, the dread of mere temporal liabilities would suffice to ensure your appearance in this sacred edifice twice every week; but is not the apprehension of those future and endless penalties which are annexed by the Lord of the Sabbath, sufficient to quicken you to a becoming observance of this hallowed day? So true is it that "because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."<sup>1</sup> It is only, in your judgment, for old women and school-children, or other weak-minded persons, to trouble their heads about such things as religion. Still you feel, of course, that this same religion cannot be dispensed with altogether. It will be very desirable—yea, necessary—whenever you shall be taken ill, and expect to die; just as nauseous medicines and lotions will

<sup>1</sup> Eccles. viii. 11.

then be requisite, which nobody would think of resorting to until such a time. Now permit me to ask whence you have formed your idea of God, if you have really succeeded in persuading yourself that He will submit to be so treated by you with impunity? What can be your opinion of all the vehement warnings and fervent appeals by His inspired servants in successive ages to such as you? You do not believe them. Is it not so? Decide a parallel case. Suppose that you had come to my house last night when I was fast asleep in bed, and, knocking violently at the front door, apprized me urgently and importunately, that I might at any moment be burnt to death, for that my house was on fire. If I had listened to what you said, and then, with cool indifference, closed the window in your face, gone back again to my bed, and composed myself to slumber just as before, what would you have thought of me? Why, surely that I yielded no credence whatever to your story; else I would at once have bestirred myself to escape out of danger. You would have judged rightly. Now Christ Himself declares to you—explicitly, repeatedly declares, “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”<sup>1</sup> You hear His apostle Paul, after

<sup>1</sup> Luke, xiii. 3, 5.

enumerating as works of the flesh, "adultery, fornication, lasciviousness, hatred, variance, heresies, envyings, drunkenness, and revellings," saying, "of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God ;"<sup>1</sup> and again, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."<sup>2</sup> You hear these statements now from me ; look into your Bibles, and you will read them with your own eyes. Shortly you quit this church to return to your usual occupations—to live on through the week, and indefinitely, just as heretofore, without the faintest intention of making any change in your habits, or any effort in acquiring "holiness." What then, in my turn, am I to infer from your conduct ? Why, clearly that you give no credence to these affirmations in your Bible. You do not believe that God really means what He says. Were you honestly satisfied in your own mind that unless you set about turning to God, and looking to your soul, in earnest, you will not simply be burnt to death, but may expect to be scorched everlastingly—crying aloud for death, but never able to die—would *you* not bestir *yourself* without delay ? But

<sup>1</sup> Gal. v. 19, 20, 21.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. xii. 14.

no; you do not choose to believe in anything of this sort. You intend to creep somehow into heaven at last. Your intention, however, of so doing, cannot be founded upon a predilection for heavenly employments. For is there not something greatly more congenial to your taste in the tap-room of a tavern, than you would find in heaven as represented in the Scriptures? Would you feel most happy and at home, among noisy and profane jokers, or in the company of sinless angels? Is it not more than probable that, disposed as you now are, you would grow so weary of eternity in heaven, that it would become almost hell itself to you? But useless is the query, whether or not heaven would prove to you the delightful place all persons are taught to regard it, — for what pronounces an authority which I consider decisive? “There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.”<sup>1</sup>

What result may I anticipate from this my final appeal to you? God forbid that (unless after preaching to others, I myself shall be a castaway), our parting to-night shall be a parting for ever!

<sup>1</sup> Rev. xxi. 27.



What I have been saying to you, may sound extravagantly strict. Be it so. I assure you that I am not so unreasonable, as to expect or wish any of you, to accept anything which I have now, or heretofore, uttered, from this pulpit, *because I have said it*. I would have you, on reaching home, to search into your Bibles, and think over what I state. If you find my words true, believe them, and act upon them, however unpalatable; if they be not warranted by what you read there, reject them by all means. Pray make the conditions of getting to heaven, as easy as you can; only, I repeat, do not try to fancy them easier than God's own Word will bear you out,—unless you would deliberately deceive yourselves: which, in a question so important as Eternity, methinks is very poor wisdom. Whether you hear or whether you forbear,<sup>1</sup> I doubt not that what I have spoken thus plainly, will be received by you in the same spirit of hearty kindness, in which it has been delivered by me. But my inmost wish and prayer is, that some one remark or statement made this afternoon, may be found to stay upon your minds, and induce you to reflect seriously upon your present course of living; in which case, believe me, should you be

<sup>1</sup> Ezek. iii. 11.

laid low by accident, or whenever you come to die, you will bless God for it,—yea, throughout endless ages.

To the ELDER BOYS AND GIRLS OF THE PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS, I must offer some affectionate counsel. Blessed are you, my young friends, in being taught from your earliest years, like Timothy, to know the Holy Scriptures, “which are able to make you wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”<sup>1</sup> How blessed you, perhaps, at present think not; but you may ascertain in some measure from any religious person, who, unable to read, can only gather such a knowledge of God’s will and His wondrous mercy in Christ, as may be acquired here on a Sabbath from the desk and pulpit; who is unable to join in singing the hymns, and labours under irksome disadvantage even in following the minister in the prayers. Oh! be thankful for the educational privileges to which *you* have been born,—privileges unknown to your forefathers, to whom the Bible was an almost unattainable, and even sealed book,—privileges unenjoyed by your own parents. Through life let no day pass over your heads without your *reading* (and riveting in your memories, if possible,) *one or two*

<sup>1</sup> 2 Tim. iii. 15.

*verses of Scripture.* With three hundred and sixty-five verses laid up every year, think what an effective armory you will accumulate against the assaults of the wicked one ! Not a temptation could he bring to bear upon you which you would not be enabled to encounter with its appropriate text, and through grace overcome, like our Divine Redeemer Himself, with "It is written." I say "through grace;" for you know well that texts, however suitable, if unaccompanied by the Holy Spirit, will avail you no more than any other set of words. You must *pray,—feel* your prayers, and not be content with merely having "said" them. Have two fixed times for praying every day, and let nothing induce you to omit so doing. Thus shall you grow in grace, as you grow in years. Give me the satisfaction, moreover, of hearing, after our departure, that you are still, as heretofore, regular at the *Sunday-school*. Let no false pride, no absurd notion of being too old to attend, no silly and ignorant taunts of others, induce you to relinquish it. In a Sunday-school with which I was formerly acquainted, where the average number of scholars present was nine hundred, young men and women, after their marriage, thought it no degradation in them to attend as before. And were they not to be respected for so doing ? They were sensible of

the benefit which they had been deriving therefrom all their youth up ; and why should they deprive themselves of it, because they had married ? But do not suppose, that I would have you undervalue the instruction supplied to you in the *daily school*. Forsake that on no account, until imperatively obliged to do so, in order to obtain your livelihood. Be diligent, docile, and submissive when there ; as I have great pleasure in acknowledging that (with very few exceptions), you have hitherto been. Most of you, I feel sure, are very happy when at school,—happier than during your holidays. But, —what is of so much more importance,—think of the profit which you are gaining so long as you continue to go !<sup>1</sup>—the learning to *read*, not only the Best of all books, but any instructive and entertaining publication which may fall into your hands. Thus you are enabled to employ many a leisure half-hour rationally. In this day of cheap and superabundant literature, you never need be in want of something to read. Only beware *what* you read. Consult some one qualified to advise you in your choice ; and who is so likely as your clergyman ? Here is a noble purpose for which to save some of your earnings ! What a feast of

<sup>1</sup> Note I.

information is within reach of any of you ! What a source of ever-fresh gratification unmixed with regret ! Look at the many who have grown up untaught to read. A printed book and a private letter are equally so much marked paper to them. Moreover, through sheer lack of other and higher means of amusement (and amusement of some kind we all will and must have), how strong is the temptation to seek it, in stupifying and worse than wasting that intellect, which distinguishes them from brute creatures ! And what shall I say respecting the advantages consequent upon your learning to *write* ?—the conveniency of your being capable of communicating by letter with distant friends, without being obliged to reveal everything (however confidential), that you may wish to say, to some third person ? The usefulness of an acquaintance with *accounts* is self-evident ; especially if an opportunity of bettering your worldly condition be ever providentially afforded you. Without a competent knowledge of reading, penmanship, and arithmetic, you can scarcely hope to raise yourselves much above the grade to which you have been born. Honest self-advancement in the social scale is permissible, yea, laudable ; provided that you cheerfully acquiesce, and be quite willing and content to remain in your present station, if

such be the will of God. But whether you aspire after promotion, or wish to be retained in any situation which you now hold, bear in mind the great importance of *character*. If you desire to obtain or keep any position of trust, you must be found trustworthy. Never allow yourself to utter a falsehood, or in the smallest degree to impose upon another, under any pretext whatever. No circumstances possible can justify you in so doing. Rest assured that it is your truest wisdom, no less as regards this world than the future one, to be able to say with St. Paul, "Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence, toward God and toward men."<sup>1</sup> You may deceive once or twice, but "be sure your sin will find you out;"<sup>2</sup> and once detected, ever after suspected. Begin from this day; and do nothing which you would be afraid of being seen by your respected master, or rather by One infinitely greater, even the Almighty Himself, from whom you can hide nothing. Whenever you find yourself deliberately meditating the doing of something which a voice within tells you not to do, (the temptation gathering tenfold strength over you from a persuasion of your being unobserved), reflect, "Thou, God, seest

<sup>1</sup> Acts, xxiv. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Num. xxxii. 23.

me!"<sup>1</sup> or, rather, do not proceed to commit the forbidden act, until you have turned to and read through Psalm cxxxix., and endeavoured to think each word of it. Try to contemplate the great God above as an omnipresent Being. He telleth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names. He notes and follows the movements of every fish, in the depths of the fathomless ocean. Not a leaf is stirred by the change of posture of some wild beast in the recesses of an African forest, but He marks the same. Some water-fowl may just now have been screeching and flapping their wings in a certain spot on the borders of one of the American lakes; He observed them, and enabled them so to do. A serpent may, within the last few moments, have been coiling itself among some long grass far away up the river Ganges in India; He watched the reptile doing so. At the very same time, perhaps, a bear might be seen crossing a large piece of ice in some creek of inhospitable Greenland; it did so only with His permission. A ship, sailing near the equator, is at this instant tacking round; One from above the skies beholds it. At the corner of some obscure alley in immense London, a dog has just stopped to pick up

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xvi. 13.

something; an Eye beyond the remotest star observed that something,—a Providence that directs and sustains all the solar systems of infinite space, placed that something there, and for that dog. Three sparrows, neither more nor fewer, may now be perched on the roof of your home here in Clاندون; the same Eye is noting them. “All things are naked and open unto Him with whom we have to do.”<sup>1</sup> “Hell and destruction are before the Lord: how much more, then, the hearts of the children of men.”<sup>2</sup> Ah! you are never alone. You cannot be unseen. Act accordingly. Forasmuch as God is so amazing a Being, well may you and I stand in awe of Him at all times and in all places, and particularly in this or any other place specially consecrated to Him. Some of you whom I could name, and in whose young hearts I verily believe is springing the seed of eternal life, are worthy of being imitated, as patterns of serious propriety and attentiveness, by persons of double your age. But sorry I am to think, how repeatedly I have been necessitated to find fault with others of you, and that publicly, for your obstinate, unseemly levity here in your Maker’s more immediate presence. Indeed, as you know, one of your fellow-

<sup>1</sup> Heb. iv. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Prov. xv. 11.



choristers<sup>1</sup> I have been constrained, on this account, to expel from the school. I am aware that you could plead the even grosser misbehaviour of those somewhat older than yourselves—an insolence of profanity, the scandal of which, and the annoyance of which to all quiet and earnest worshippers (you may remind me), at length increased to such a pitch, as to oblige me to adopt the extreme measure of requesting the regular attendance of a policeman, on the afternoon of the first Sunday in every month, when the Sacrament of Baptism is wont to be administered. But what if the Most High has been so insulted to His face,—what if public decency has been so outraged—by those of whom something better might have been expected, was the demeanour of certain of your number rendered thereby less bad? No; “every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”<sup>2</sup> “Keep, then, thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil.”<sup>3</sup> Yes, “honour the Lord, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words.”<sup>4</sup> Under the Lord, and next to Him, “honour *thy father and thy mother*.”<sup>5</sup> Not only

<sup>1</sup> Note K.<sup>2</sup> Rom. xiv. 12.<sup>3</sup> Eccles. v. 1.<sup>4</sup> Isa. lviii. 13.<sup>5</sup> Exod. xx. 12.

always pay them outward deference and respect, but implicitly obey their every expressed or even supposed wish. Remember that God has invested them with authority over you as His deputies: recognise this in them; and let the thought of it exercise a corresponding influence on your conduct towards them. They are but mortal, and therefore liable to err, it is true; and they may occasionally exact what may seem to you alike foolish and capricious. And you may be correct in your opinion. But the injunction of an apostle is, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right."<sup>1</sup> Only one exception is permissible in you, viz. when to comply with their requirements would oblige you to sin against God; when they, His appointed guides and guardians to you for good, bid you to deceive, or do anything plainly forbidden by Him in His Word. May none of you be ever placed in so sad a position! But should such unhappily be your case, be most careful respecting your manner of declining to comply. Pray to your Father in heaven, that you may be enabled to fulfil a most painful, sorrowful duty, in a right spirit. Afford them not a particle of ground for misapprehension of your motive. Make it as clear as noonday to them, by

<sup>1</sup> Eph. vi. 1.

your tender solicitude and redoubled alacrity to please them in everything else, that in your present extraordinary refusal you have been actuated by not the faintest impulse of self-will ; and that nothing less important than a scruple of conscience, could have forced you to it. I will only further remind you of what your reason, and, I hope, natural feelings suggest,—that grateful attachment is a debt which you will ever owe them, for all which they have done and are doing for you ; that you help them according to your power, and strive to be the comfort and the pride of their declining years ; and, above all, that so long as they are spared to you, you never fail to make daily sincere mention of them in your private prayers. And may he who shall in future watch for your souls, be cheered by the sight of many a flower of grace among you, opening to the beams of the Sun of righteousness beneath his culture, shedding the fragrance of piety more and more, till removed to the Paradise above !

In this part of my discourse, I must offer a word of exhortation also to those of you, who form the ADULT FEMALE BIBLE CLASS. I will, first, give you a parting caution in reference to *dress*. Our common Father has been pleased to ordain that there should exist among us diversities of rank ;

and that these social differences should in part be regulated, by the amount of worldly means with which He has blessed us respectively. So thoroughly is this a fixed principle of the Divine Government, that were we all placed on the same pecuniary level to-day, ere the setting of to-morrow's sun the undesigned uniformity would have become disturbed; their superior energy, thrift, or skill, having again raised some above their fellows. To the several divisions and subdivisions of the social scale, differences of responsibility appertain; differences of duty, differences of temptation attach; so that what is seemly and unblamable in persons belonging to one grade, is totally unbecoming those belonging to another. "Let your moderation be known unto all men"<sup>1</sup> is an apostolic precept, applicable to us all; and as much so in respect of apparel, as of other particulars. But what would be a strictly "moderate" and fitting measure and manner of adornment in us, if providentially members of a high class of the community, would be indicative of extravagance or personal vanity, if our lot has been assigned us in an humble sphere. I recommend you to leave flounces and artificial flowers, brooches and brace-

<sup>1</sup> Philip. iv. 5.

lets, to those young women with whom modesty is a discarded grace. Desire to be distinguished rather, by the simplicity and neatness of your attire. Whatever Gospel excellencies you see in your superiors, copy ; such things are attainable by you as much as by them, and are as pleasing in the eyes of Him who "is no respecter of persons."<sup>1</sup> Care not to copy them in their clothing, even in its shape and outward appearance ; you cannot in fabric. Fine trumpery, and cheap imitations of expensive articles, would raise you in the real esteem of none. They might serve your purpose, if you court notice ; but the notice so attracted to yourselves, I need hardly tell you, would be only the notice of pity on the part of right-minded spectators, and of improper freedom accompanied with contempt on the part of others. I hope better things of all of you, though I thus speak. The only kind of notice desired by you is, the favourable esteem and opinion of the good ; and heartily ashamed, therefore, are you (as you ought to be) of those of your sex, whom you may have observed not unfrequently, when within hearing of persons of the opposite sex, seeking to draw attention towards themselves, by their loudness of

<sup>1</sup> Acts, x. 34.

talk and meretricious laugh. Oh! the winning loveliness of a meek and quiet spirit,— a feminine ornament of great price in the sight of God,<sup>1</sup> and, believe me, of man too. That no one of you will ever needlessly be out late at night, I feel sure. You individually entertain too anxious a regard for your character, too sensitive a dread of falling into temptation, to need any admonition from me on this point. I deem it unnecessary to say more with regard to your conduct while at home.

But nearly all of you will ere long leave your parents, in order to gain your livelihood as domestic servants. If so, the seemly plainness which I have just advised, will then become a matter of necessity. Nothing pretentious is permitted in any respectable household. You will, therefore, have no temptation to squander your wages on dress; and with an ample supply of suitable clothes you may provide yourselves, at comparatively small expense. Of what remains of your earnings, every quarter send home something towards the help and “requit”<sup>2</sup> of your parents; consecrate a certain sum (as much as you can afford) to religious and charitable purposes, and deposit the residue in a Savings’-Bank. Added to each year, the accumulated principal and interest.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. iii. 4.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Tim. v. 4.

of your money will become a little treasury—to be one day found useful. In your choice of a situation, you already know what I would have you to make your primary object of solicitude and enquiry,—the religious opportunities to be afforded you. A young woman who left my service about three years ago, in order to live in Bath on account of weak eyes, engaged herself to an old invalid lady, with whom she stayed only twelve months, receiving fifteen pounds. And why did she quit her aged mistress, who was perfectly satisfied with her, and by whom she was most kindly treated? Because she had seldom an opportunity of attending church. Solely for this reason she exchanged that situation for her present one, in which she considers the comparative smallness of her wages—no more than eight pounds—amply compensated for, by a permission to attend church seven times in every fortnight. With what she can spare out of eight pounds, she “does all she can for the Pastoral Aid and Church Missionary Societies.” Some of you, I dare say, are, at this moment, fancying her a heavy and sad-looking creature, having a monomaniacal fondness for the inside of some church. You could not form a more erroneous idea. With a blithe and animated countenance, she declares herself to be quite happy and contented; and it must be presumed that she

best knows her own feelings. Would you be equally happy and contented in service? Adopt her course. Seek admission into sincerely pious families. If you have not the wisdom to do this from the highest of motives, do so from the lowest, —a regard for your own comfort. It is only in such families you must expect to find anything like a home, or ever hope to be felt and cared for as fellow-creatures of the same Creator, fellow-immortals, by those whom you serve.<sup>1</sup> Hire yourselves to a worldly mistress, and you must be content to be viewed as scarcely of the same flesh and blood as herself, but more as negroes are in the United States,—as being of another and essentially inferior grade; as simply animated bed-making and cooking machines; as requisites of a house; or rather, as indispensable domestic nuisances; (would that this last designation were not so commonly merited!) and you must not be surprised, if treated with corresponding consideration: occasionally, maybe, receiving kind words, but ever subject to the impulses of a disposition fidgety, or exacting, or irritable, or domineering,—practically owning no law but the self-will of unrenowned nature. If unwell, tell not out your grief; for little commiseration

<sup>1</sup> Note L.



or allowance will you get thereby. If too ill to pursue your duties, look not for medical advice being found,—unless at your own expense ; think not of seeing the nauseous draught administered, or still less your suffering pillow watched, by a feeling mistress ; for, ill as you may be, it is almost certain that you will be sent off to your home (if you have one) ; or, at any rate, got rid of, and that without delay. “The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel :”<sup>1</sup> but would it not be unfair to omit to acknowledge, that servants as a class do very much, by their unfaithfulness and misconduct, to aggravate (though not justify) the harsh treatment they generally receive in worldly families ? I do not pretend to deny, that some such there are, whose several members are naturally amiable, kindly, and considerate ; and among whom you may accordingly make yourselves comparatively happy,—at least after conscience has sunk asleep. I would not, also, have you suppose me to promise that, even if living with the best of people,—living in a household where you may have the privilege of morning and evening social prayer, and every religious advantage,—you shall not discover something or other disagreeable. But what then ? Anticipate

<sup>1</sup> Prov. xii. 10.

it; reconcile yourselves to it; strive to bear it in a Christian frame; make it an occasion of self-discipline; turn its existence to spiritual profit; and thus get good out of what to most others would be unmixed evil. Far wiser thus to use it, than to make it a reason for quitting your post; seeking in a change of situation what you must not hope to find anywhere on earth; and thereby contracting a habit of change, subversive of your comfort, and damaging to your interests.

But while I urge upon you the duty of entering the service of only the professedly religious, I do not mean that it is unimportant what tenets they profess. Avoid resolutely connecting yourselves with Socinians, or, as they are more commonly called, Unitarians,—people who hold that our adorable Saviour was only a man, like any other man:<sup>1</sup> and let no want of a place, however urgent; no offer of wages, however liberal; let no sort of inducement whatever prevail with any one of you to engage yourself in a Roman Catholic family,—among persons who fall down before images,<sup>2</sup> look to the Virgin Mary for salvation rather than to Christ,<sup>3</sup> and believe in a variety of blasphemous

<sup>1</sup> John, i. 1, 2, 3; x. 30; xiv. 9; Matt. xxviii. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Exod. xx. 4, 5.

<sup>3</sup> John, xiv. 6.

absurdities, which it would occupy too much time barely to enumerate. Remain in the employ of no one, who refuses you permission to attend church *at least* once every Sunday. Whoever is indifferent on this point, cannot feel the value of her soul. If you stay only six months in any household, where this meet and just boon is denied you, from the mere disuse of Sabbath ordinances, you will gradually lose your desire for them; your unrighteous deprivation of them will by degrees be felt by you less and less as a hardship; and you will soon become inwardly careless, whether you have opportunity of attending church at all or not. Meanwhile you will have begun to see less and less to censure in your frivolous and giddy fellow-servants (if such you have); for your own opinions and inclinations will have been unconsciously growing more and more into unison with theirs. Most insidiously down-hill is the road to perdition; and many a sore struggle and deep sigh of despair will it cost you, be assured, if once you venture wilfully out of the way of known duty, before you shall recover your lost ground, and get up again to your present measure of spiritual attainment. But no: I will not wrong you by suspecting that any of you will thus reward all the prayers and advice of your teacher. Not such is to be the result of all your

exemplary regularity and attention. Rather will we expect you to shine as lights in the world,<sup>1</sup> holding forth that Word of Life in which you have been instructed ; yea, instruments of conversion to many a thoughtless one, who shall witness your conscientious fidelity to the interests of your employers ; your beautifully accommodating temper under all their requirements ; your blameless, kind, unobtrusive deportment ; your quiet, unswerving consistency of holiness. Yes, being a sterling Christian, and therefore exhibiting the example of one, each of you will act always as in the sight of God ; thoroughly single-minded and above-board, rigidly truthful and outspoken ; ever the same behind your mistress's back as before her face, and, by consequence, never fearing her sudden appearance : not one of those sleek deceivers (so very common), who are all innocence in their employer's presence, but no sooner are they sure of her being out of sight and bearing, than they are all alacrity to join in any license, in anything however well known to be strictly prohibited ;—deceivers, who will leave undone, or do in a slovenly manner, any work given, if only it seem likely that their performance will not be examined ;—unprincipled

<sup>1</sup> Phil. ii. 15, 16.

deceivers, who will try to corrupt you into a persuasion that there is really no wrong in, Eve-like, tasting or consuming dainties known by you to be proscribed, whenever it can be done clandestinely ; as though to eat a sweetmeat not your own were not as certainly a breach of the eighth commandment, as the stealing of a diamond ring. But to little use will have been all your lessons in the Bible, if you so act. Be ever on your guard lest Satan succeed in getting in the thin end of the wedge (for he will be always trying); "whom resist, steadfast in the faith."<sup>1</sup> Be you "obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ ; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers ; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart ; with good will doing service as to the Lord, and not to men : knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free."<sup>2</sup>

Still, however unexceptionable your own personal conduct, take good heed that you never, by connivance, render yourselves partakers of your fellow-servants' sins.<sup>3</sup> This is no needless caution

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. v. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Eph. vi. 5-8.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Tim. v. 22.

to the best of you ; it is a caution against a well-nigh universal fault, of the class to whom you will shortly belong. Often have I been astonished by remarking, how out of mistaken kindness, and a one-sided utterly false conception of the obligations of charity, even piously disposed servants are wont to screen the misdeeds of any fellow-servant from their employers. They may be perfectly aware, that their master is continually sustaining loss through a dependant's roguery, but seem to reckon it a point of honour, if not of religious duty, not to divulge what they know to the former. In time, doubtless the master himself discovers, that he has been robbed, and by whom. And when he does so, what confidence can he henceforward place even in those who, though upright themselves, had so long and knowingly suffered him to be cheated ? The motives, actuating servants in thus sheltering any guilty companion, are usually either indolent and unprincipled indifference,—as though the matter were no concern of theirs ; or an unwillingness to give the wrong-doer offence ; or the consideration, that if they themselves had done wrong, they would have deemed it unkind, had another told of them. Now, what would you or I think and do, were we in that injured master's position ? Would we not view those servants as little better than accomplices of

the actual purloiner? Would we not, for the sake of our future security and peace of mind, at once relieve ourselves of them? Would not you or I consider that we had not been treated by them as we had a right to expect,—in the spirit of that golden rule of the Gospel, “As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise?”<sup>1</sup> Again, be no less resolved not to participate in any sin of your employers. Should you foolishly hire yourselves to a worldly master and mistress, you must expect to find your principles tried by orders, which you cannot execute, without violating the sanctity of the Lord’s day; and that you are required to perform thereon labours, manifestly unnecessary. Unless feeling not quite well enough to go (and how strange that the indispositions of many usually happen on Sundays!), *they* may decorously attend church themselves. You, however, it is likely, will have occupation found you during the best portion of the sacred hours, in getting ready for them an elaborate dinner, wherewith agreeably to conclude the solemnities of worship. Even though you should be neither cook nor kitchenmaid, be not surprised if kept within the house—to read your Bible, and through the public prayers, in

<sup>1</sup> Luke, vi. 31.

private, if you choose; or, which I fear is more probable, to gaze out on passers-by. Nay, occasionally, you may be kept hard at work in preparing for an entertainment, to be given early in the ensuing week. Others, I know, have been so tasked before you. Here, then, is a test—a providentially ordained test—of your faithfulness to a higher Master in heaven: “Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto man more than unto God, judge ye.”<sup>1</sup> The Almighty enjoins,—“In it (the Sabbath) thou shalt not do any work, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant; that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou.”<sup>2</sup> Should then you be asked to do more than an absolutely requisite amount of ordinary work, what would be your plain duty? Respectfully, but steadily to refuse; even though dismissal should be the alternative. You will have the approval of One who has all hearts and all events under His governance; and who will not (you may rest confident) permit you ultimately to be a loser, by making the dictates of conscience rather than of worldly interest, the rule of your actions. Indeed I doubt not that your sterling strength of principle, your own care for your soul (whether cared for by

<sup>1</sup> Acts, iv. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Deut. v. 14.



others or not), will be admired and respected by the very person who resents the exhibition of it ; and the fact rising to the surface of memory in some future hour of calm reflection, and when you are living far away amid other associations, may mercifully be blessed to her enduring benefit.

You may find some of the foregoing remarks verified, wherever you may be living. In consequence, however, of the paucity of eligible situations in this neighbourhood, you are necessitated to repair to towns. Many of you, it is likely, will locate yourselves in Bath. I have already warned you of the sin and danger of allowing yourselves in the neglect of the house of God. Let me now caution you against being drawn by the enemy of your souls into a different, but specious snare of his, which besets you even here in your own village, but with which among the populous community of Bath (where there are no fewer than twenty-five churches and episcopal chapels, and twenty-seven places of worship belonging to the numerous bodies of Nonconformists), he appears deplorably triumphant. Yield not then to a desire (which is almost sure to rise within you) of roaming from one church to another, or, still worse, of frequenting occasionally, as humour leads, this or that Dissenters' chapel. Attend the church which is

nearest to your abode, and (unless for some unanswerable reason) keep to it. Do not be of those whom St. Paul foretells, who “will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.”<sup>1</sup> Let me guard you against imbibing that false liberalism, nowadays too prevalent, which seems to account all forms of belief equally acceptable to God, if only sincerely entertained;—a notion which, though possibly embraced by some through a perverted interpretation of their Bible, is generally, I fear, to be imputed to a want of earnestness about vital religion of any sort. Indulge yourselves in the morbid, pietist vagrancy to which I have alluded, and you will be “ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”<sup>2</sup> Nay, this habit of admitting into your minds a mixture of conflicting teachings and sentiments, would be likely to occasion their serious unsettlement, and might result in worse than perplexity, or even scepticism,—in the casting off the Gospel itself as a fable. Prevention is always better than cure: listen then in time. “Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye

<sup>1</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Ib. iii. 7.

shall find rest for your souls.”<sup>1</sup> The “old paths” are those Catholic Episcopal paths, which, it is almost certain, were laid in this island by Paul himself:—“episcopal,” I say, for we find mention of our British bishops in very early times, ere Popery, the masterpiece of Satan, was anywhere as yet established. “The good way” is that middle and safe way of the Reformed Church, into which you were as infants baptized;—a Church, in its real self, and not misrepresented by party zeal, removed alike from mediæval superstition and modern fanaticism;—a Church which, I have ascertained to my *own* conviction, can claim, both in doctrine and constitution, more truly than any other, to be “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the Head Corner Stone.”<sup>2</sup>

In the next place, do not forget in how considerable a measure your happiness, in any situation, depends on yourselves,—upon your self-government, and upon your viewing things aright. A captiously-disposed person is never without a grievance. Some are always perversely ready to think themselves oppressed; and, indeed, appear never so satisfied, as when most cordially expressing dissatisfaction. Each of you beware of contracting this.

<sup>1</sup> Jer. vi. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Eph. ii. 20.

temper ; check it if it be already yours ; for it cannot co-exist with due thankfulness to God : and, as regards yourself,—it renders your mind “like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.”<sup>1</sup> Such, I need hardly say, account many a thing a hardship which is no hardship at all, but, in truth, a benefit. For instance, if in any town situation where your master and mistress have a proper sense of their responsibilities, you will be required to return direct from church on Sundays ; and you will not be allowed (unless under the charge of some one of tried prudence and morality), to go out in the dark, especially on Sundays. These regulations many a girl, giddily disposed, and envious of the greater liberty accorded to some of her acquaintances,—servants whose morals are less cared for,—indignantly resents, as unendurable tyranny ; but your good sense will tell you that, although unpleasant perhaps to your natural inclination, they are needful restraints, and therefore no tyranny. Cheerfully acquiesce in strict rules such as these, if you have any desire not to be vitiated to the level of the majority of servants in Bath ; for I have reason to fear that there, among

<sup>1</sup> Isa. lvii. 20.

your class, the evening of the Lord's Day is the market time of Satan. Another often-alleged hardship is excess of work. Do not be too easily alarmed by the amount of labour required of you. We, all of us, are designed by our Maker to work in this world,<sup>1</sup> whether we do so or not. Occupy your every leisure minute with reading and sewing; the reading first, as a general rule, in order to furnish you with something agreeable and innocent to think about. In the large households of the wealthy, domestics are often found so afraid of wearing out their limbs, or rather of performing the most trifling act which they conceive not strictly to appertain to their department, as to seem to expect to be maintained for doing as little as possible. And do they, in thus consulting their indolence and petty pride, best secure their own comfort? Not unless continual jealousies and bickerings constitute comfort. I pity any one who has little to do, in whatever position. The lives of many a lady and gentleman whom you perhaps envy, are insipid indeed. Were it in the power of any of you at this moment to choose between a career of hard work and usefulness, and one of idleness and self-gratification, you

<sup>1</sup> Gen. ii. 15; Matt. xxv. 30; Eph. iv. 28; 1 Thess. iv. 11;  
<sup>2</sup> Thess. iii. 10.

would do wisely, on all accounts, in preferring the former. A mind fully and well occupied, is an indispensable ingredient of earthly happiness.

I will trouble you with only one or two other cautions, which I urge upon you with most anxious earnestness. Needful are they, if you should take service in a resort of fashion like Bath ; but exceedingly important, should you venture (as some have from this district) to seek your bread in the far-off metropolis. Bad as your native village may be, you are little prepared by living in it, for the perils and pitfalls awaiting such of you — in that Sodom multiplied a hundred-fold. If, then, you desire to avoid the risk of having your present good principles sapped, be most chary in making acquaintances among strangers ; and, more particularly, whom you admit to become your intimate friends. Moral poison is never so certain of operating successfully, as when distilled from the lips of a bosom-companion.

Again, should an opportunity ever occur to you of visiting some place of public amusement, accede not to any invitations or solicitations to go there, without having previously ascertained, beyond the possibility of mistake, the perfect innocency of the amusement itself, and of *all its accompaniments*. So long as the faintest shadow of a scruple re-

mains upon your mind as to its lawfulness, to go there would be sin in you. Defilement, contracted however unintentionally, may not be wholly obliterated to your dying hour. Go to no place where you do not feel *certain* that you go with God's permission and blessing. In any question of difficulty in such matters, we must hope that you cannot err greatly, if you ask and be guided by the advice, of the clergyman of the church which you attend.

And, lastly, be wary—you cannot be *too* wary—of lending an ear for an instant, to the flattering attentions or professions of any man much superior to yourselves. His words may be smoother than oil; but do you “be wise as serpents.”<sup>1</sup> You must have discovered already, that men are not always what they appear. Satan can transform himself into an angel of light.<sup>2</sup> Plausible as practised villany can be, under any circumstances, it is doubly dangerous to girls brought up in the country, comparatively simple-minded, and new to the wickedness that is in the world.<sup>3</sup> Oh! among the thousands of poor loathsome outcasts who may be nightly seen swarming beneath the gas-lamps of London, how many could tell you a sad tale of the

<sup>1</sup> Matt. x. 16.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. xi. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Note M.

infernally successful of the profligate's craft, when concealed under the trappings of wealth! Alas! who can help shedding a tear of pity over those thoughtless victims who have bartered the priceless birthright of a Christian,—for what?—and are now leading a miserable life of infamy, execrating the day of their birth. But you, my young friends, have been instructed in your Bible. It shall not have been in vain. Whilst knowing the hell-traps with which your path is mined, you know also where to look for effectual preservation. Oh! let me entreat each one of you—as you value your honour, your well-being, your soul,—never to quit your chamber in a morning, without having committed yourself in prayer to the Lord's own keeping. A flighty, godless fellow-servant may share the same bedroom with you. Be not scared from your purpose by her presence. Heed not any senseless sneer or taunt in which she may indulge. He, before whom you are kneeling, feels it as directed against Himself. Do you boldly confess Christ, and He will confess you before the angels. How know you what your quiet perseverance in so doing may effect in your companion? Some day, when you least expect it, you may be delighted to observe, "Behold, she prayeth!" And so, likewise, never go to rest



without acknowledging, by your bedside, God's continued kindnesses, and forbearing preservation of you through the past day; begging His protection during the hours of insensibility; and beseeching that if it be His will that you should awake not in this world, but another, it may be to see Him as He is. I can scarcely believe that any one of you will omit such a felt bounden duty, from a weak dread of being seen to kneel down. Suppose yourself to have been guilty of this cowardice; mark the consequence. To say nothing of your deliberate forfeiture of the Divine regard, would you have been practising that "love" which "worketh no ill to his neighbour?"<sup>1</sup> Could you be said to have been doing no harm to your companion thereby? Alas! if she should be an irreligious person, your omission will have tended to confirm her in her irreligion: if her heart be somewhat turned to God, but she be as yet feeble in faith, your omission may have imparted an irresistible strength to a feeling of false shame in *her*, and given Satan a victory over the suggestions of an awakened conscience. In fine, in all the duties of a Christian's life, no less than in this of private prayer, whatever betide, compromise not a tittle of

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xiii. 10.

principle out of deference to worldly persons, whether they be your equals, or even superiors in station. "Keep innocency, and take heed unto the thing that is right; for that shall bring a man peace at the last."<sup>1</sup> Forget not who it is that saith, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."<sup>2</sup> And forget not also, "the time is short."

As regards others of you of A LIKE AGE, BUT OF MY OWN SEX, it is probable that only a few exceptional ones will ever be tried by the temptations of town-life. Most of you will prosecute the peculiar calling to which you have been brought up, in this or some other colliery district. But you can ruin your souls in a coal-mine or behind a plough, as effectually as in a cotton-mill or behind a counter. Under every variety of external circumstances, unconverted human nature is still the same. Satan and his emissaries leave not a human being uncanvassed; and you will show on whose side you are, in one place as in another. If any of you choose to fill your minds with filthiness and your bones with disease, to squander your earnings and sap your constitutions in slaking a thirst of your own creating, you may find resorts for so

<sup>1</sup> Ps. xxxvii. 38 : Prayer-book version.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. ii. 10.

doing, and no lack of experienced instructors twice as old as yourselves,—even hereabouts. But “be not deceived:” whether they be found in the gaudy gin-palace or the paintless pot-house, in the most crowded of thoroughfares or among the most rural of hedgerows—“neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor thieves, nor drunkards, nor revilers, shall inherit the kingdom of God.” “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you; which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”<sup>1</sup> How many of you are humbly making this your earnest aim? Young men, you are at the most critical point in the journey of life. Two roads lie before you, branching off, one to the right hand, the other to the left, of the throne of future Judgment. Which of the two are you severally taking? Believe me, to a faithful pastor you are the objects of deepest interest among all his flock, and I fear, too commonly, his most painful concern.

Some of you must remember a solemn scene in which you were principal actors — on the seventeenth of April last,—when you pledged yourselves

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 19, 20.

in presence of a large assembly, for the rest of your days on earth, to make heaven your aim, God your Friend, and the Bible your guide. In reliance upon your apparent sincerity, the Bishop, after laying his hands upon you, gave you his benediction. Now in what have those promises—publicly, preparedly made—resulted? In what have like engagements, entered into three years previously by others of your number, resulted? What says a monitor in each of your bosoms respecting your subsequent course of conduct? How different from what might have been fondly looked for by any one unacquainted with his own heart! After such a fair show of blossom, where is the corresponding fruit? Nearly all shrivelled and come to nought, through the blighting influence of a godless atmosphere, the work of the caterpillar (Satan), and the inherent tendency to decay in poor human nature! On last Easter-day (the Sabbath preceding the Confirmation) a portion of you spontaneously presented yourselves at the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. How often have such of you attended the same divinely appointed ordinance since? Seldom, or not at all. And why so? Maybe from some such cause as follows. In waiting behind to join with us in communicating on that particular occasion (perhaps from no higher

motive than impulse or curiosity), you took a laudably bold step;—a step from which persons older than yourselves shrink, though feeling and acknowledging it to be their duty. You were afterwards reviled and derided by your companions in work, for what you had done. Each one of you had no root in himself,<sup>1</sup> and secretly regretted having linked himself with the eleven others. The day of Confirmation arrived, and went. The charm of novelty, which had chiefly imparted to the event its attractiveness in your eyes, passed off with the day's proceedings; and the fact of your ever having undertaken such open, explicit, and professedly decided engagements to a life of holiness and prayer, in a strangely brief space was well-nigh forgotten. You meanwhile looked around; and lo! the whole of those of your own age (very few excepted) seemed to think nothing about pleasing God. Why should *you*? This question you might have answered by asking yourself another;—"If all these be such fools as to cast off their best Friend, is that a sufficient reason for *myself* to do so? Though they choose to ruin themselves everlastingly, why should *I*?"

But I will humbly trust that my course of

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xiii. 21.

sermons, designed to prepare you for the sacred rite, were instrumental in leading you to discern something of its momentousness; and in convincing you that Confirmation is not a matter to be lightly joined in, just for the purpose of being brought into personal contact with your Bishop, and witnessing and sharing in a not very common spectacle. No. You thought much about the step, before you took it; you became persuaded of its scriptural sanction, your bounden obligation to it, its obvious reasonableness; and you were fully aware of all involved in it. On the day of the administration of the rite, you got up with no giddy expectation of adventure, and you kept your mind in a sober frame,—feeling that you had a serious business before you. At the time of its administration, you really intended to fulfil what you promised. Then how came it to pass that you ever fell away from your “first love?”<sup>1</sup> Was it as follows?—No sooner had you set yourself, with energy of purpose, rigidly to conform your future conduct, in every particular, to the standard of faultless purity set before you in the Bible, than you found yourself forbidden, not only in such things as every one admits to be wrong, but re-

<sup>1</sup> Rev. ii. 4.

quired to relinquish some practices which, in times past, you had been wont to reckon altogether innocent. On discovering this, you were but too ready by any sophistry to satisfy your conscience, in evading such unexpected restraints. And what then? "Pursue your own inclination as heretofore" (whispered the devil with his usual subtilty). "On what rests this suddenly indispensable necessity for a total abandonment of habits, which have become a second nature to you,—of all your favourite enjoyments? Have you made yourself quite sure of an equivalent in their stead? Is there no danger of your proving unable to maintain this extraordinary strictness of character, which you are adopting, perseveringly unto the end? And if you should fall away, have you not the declaration of the great Apostle Paul, that you will then have brought yourself into a worse condition than you can possibly be in now? Is not heaven far distant, besides being a prize which, after all your proposed self-denial, you may miss at the last? And if these things be true, is a felicity, however exalted, but yet so speculative, worthy to be compared with pleasures which are present and certain? Think for yourself." So, perhaps, argued Satan with you; and with too complete success. I will, then, in reply, ask any such of you—Supposing

that it even were so, that the only genuine pleasure must consist in an unrestrained license to follow the devices and desires of our corrupt hearts; would you (were the choice in your power), deliberately be willing to enjoy a single day of the highest possible gratification of every sense, clearly understanding that you could do so only on condition that you should struggle, through all your remaining days, in unpitied, helpless, deepest wretchedness? You, perhaps, rightly imagine yourself incapable of any such manifest folly: and yet, may you not at this instant be guilty of madness, involving infinitely more tremendous consequences? You may be purchasing a transitory and most uncertain life of carelessness and sin at the price of — oh! what an eternity!

Perhaps you consider within yourself, that it will be quite time enough to set about patching up your peace with God, when you begin to feel the infirmities of age creeping upon you; when “the earthly house of this tabernacle” seems to exhibit symptoms of rapid decay. But would it not surely be a grievous insult to Almighty God, to deliberately meditate thus treating Him, even if you possessed a warrant in His own handwriting, that you are indeed to be spared till old? Whereas, how know you that you may not have just wit-



nessed your last Christmas? How know you that you are not to perish by an accident through the snapping of a chain, within the very next month? Or, should this not be ordained for you, robust and strong as you may feel, are you proof against an attack of that fever, under which others of your own age have lately sunk, and are now no more? Think, too, of the incalculable number of other varieties of disease, by any one of which (unlikely as you may deem it) you may be, any day, laid low; yes, be hurried off, perhaps more speedily than many a one feebler and older. Prudently, therefore, “boast not thyself” even “of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.”<sup>1</sup> Upon what principles do any of you compute, that the malady which is to close your career, is of a kind which will leave your intellect sufficiently vigorous and clear, and your body sufficiently free from pain, to suffer you to think upon any subject, much more investigate a lifetime, and “work out your salvation?”<sup>2</sup> Can you inform us of the exact number of hours, which shall be afforded you between the first touch by the finger of death bidding you to “prepare to meet your God,” and the final cessation of your pulse? You cannot: and even

<sup>1</sup> Prov. xxvii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Philip. i. 28.

if you could, what profit would there be in knowing this? The acquisition of meetness for the purity on high may well be the object of your ever-anxious, diligent, prayerful strivings from this afternoon to the moment, when your last breath shall be quivering on your thin pale lips, ready to depart. Oh! how must Satan smile on that prevailing insanity which imagines, that the Lord of heaven and earth can be conciliated with the refuse and leavings of a lifetime spent in obstinate wilfulness,—in day-by-day, heedless provocation of Him! Suffer not the plausible enemy of your souls to deceive any of you with a delusion, whereby (notwithstanding its transparency) he has succeeded in beguiling to their damnation—how many tens of thousands the last great day only will disclose.

I dare say that the forty, fifty, or sixty years which you presume to reckon upon as stretching out before you, seem almost interminable, as you look forward; but should you be providentially spared to their completion, very different will they appear, when looked back upon. In corroboration of my words, I confidently refer you to any very aged neighbour. Enquire of him whose silver locks overhanging his furrowed brow, whose once hale form now bending beneath the infirmities of natural decay, whose palsied hand and tottering step—in-

dicate a not incompetent judge. And what, think you, will be his answer? In tremulous accents he will declare to you, that even his protracted career now seems to him almost like a dream,—that indeed “the time is short.” And just so will you feel, should you ever reach the like extreme stage. But what if—all these anticipated years then over, and nothing remaining to you from them, but your accountableness to the Giver for your use of them,—you travail under a consciousness that all this space of time, mercifully lengthened out to you for preparing for the future world, has been by you wilfully thrown away upon this! Have you ever imagined yourself as seen when grown old? Let me for one moment attempt a portrait of you. Bereaved of your long-tried helpmate, the faithful one who shared with yourself in the bringing up of a numerous family, and with whom all through life you were as one soul,—you are sitting decrepid in the hearth-corner of a married child, who, mindful of her debt of love, affords you the best substitute she can for your own desolated home. There you are! seated in that self-same spot from morning till evening; your eyes cast down, or gazing at the fire; solitary among the busy; in expectation of your summons every week. What is the tenour of your musings? Or (it is by no means impossible) per-

ceiving yourself to be an unwelcome encumbrance there, and not more wanted under any other filial roof, you are found an inmate of one of the Refuges, provided by our most Christian Poor Law for the helpless and disabled; you are found, I mean, pining out the friendless residue of your stay on earth, within the jail-like exterior of some "Union." Ah! without dispute, you now no longer occupy that cottage which so well knew you once—that home of so many happy years bygone; for, unconscious though you be of crime, and despite your fourscore winters, no longer may you wander where and when you please; you are under regulations and a governor. You are not immured within a prison properly so called, you know; though maybe wearing on those honest limbs—of flesh and blood identical with the millionaire's—the brand of a distinctive clothing, painfully suggestive to yourself of—"What *can* I have done, that in my old age I have come to this?" and not improbably worse fed than many a convicted felon. And so, you know, you must abide,—but not for ever. The hour of release will come, and not less sweet, because of your being buried with the burial deemed sufficient—for a pauper. God forbid that any of you should be reduced to so pitifully degraded an end! Still, whatever your end may be,

as to outward circumstances, I am sure that you wish, in the closing evening of your life, to be able to enjoy an humbly grateful, hopeful retrospect. Well, then, be forewarned, and thus forearmed. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." Say with St. Paul—"If God be for us, who can be against us?" Yes, who is so pre-eminently worthy of your confidence? Who so able to protect, who so able to recompense you?

"But at any rate" (perhaps you are thinking within yourself) "worldly people seem to enjoy themselves for the present: I know very many, who care not in the least about religion, and never find their way into church, except it be at a funeral or a christening; who yet always appear happy enough, and things seem to go well with them." This may be quite true. God may permit the persons you speak of to prosper, and bless them with health, and a flow of animal spirits; but, as truly as "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,"<sup>1</sup> a time will come when God's Spirit will be found necessary; and are they quite sure, that the grace, which they now so despise, will be vouchsafed them as of course, just when they please, in the season of their extremity? Oh!

<sup>1</sup> John, iii. 3.

may all such discover in this world (and not in another, to their endless sorrow), the madness of thus imposing on themselves! It is with such "simple ones" we have Wisdom expostulating in the well-known passage—"Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity: I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord; they would none of my counsel; they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the ease<sup>1</sup> of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them."<sup>2</sup> Yes, *fools*. Young men, be not any of you "fools" by following in their footsteps. Forsaken in your extremity by Him who hath all destinies in His hands, to whom will you be able to turn for help,—to have recourse even for any

<sup>1</sup> Margin.

<sup>2</sup> Prov. i. 24-32.

consolation? To the boon companions of your days of health? Ah! how hearty soever their sympathy, however feelingly assiduous they (without exception) should prove, in dropping in by turns to bring your news, whereby to make you forget self, and beguile a portion of your leaden hours,—believe me, no sooner will they have gone, than the stream of thought will rush back into its channel with redoubled force, and the stern reality of your condition be to you doubly appalling; and you will reflect respecting them, as Job said long ago to his three friends—“Miserable comforters are ye all!”<sup>1</sup> But do not reckon too much on the stability and constancy of worldly friendship. You will find it, I fear, (if you have not already) very like the deceitful brook, which, while favoring weather lasts, gushes copiously enough; but let a drought occur, —when most needed, it disappears. In like manner, so long as you keep hale, are as one of themselves, a jolly sharer of the social glass, you will be greeted with the hand of eternal fellowship: fall sick, and you will be forgotten. With pathetic bitterness did a person of this village, who, corpulent a few weeks before, was then staggering about a living skeleton, and soon afterwards was com-

<sup>1</sup> Job, xvi. 2.

mitted to the ground, complain to me—"Ah! not one of them has been near me, since I was taken ill." Profit by that deceased neighbour's experience. "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put any confidence in man."<sup>1</sup> The worldly may let you *live* in their company; but you must expect, that they will leave you to *die* alone. "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God."<sup>2</sup> A truth this which holds good, as much in life as in death. Young men, be not deceived by the outsides of persons and things. Rely not always upon gay looks. There is much acting in the world. "Even in laughter the heart is often sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness."<sup>3</sup> A sermon deserving of being remembered, is contained in these six lines by Dr. Doddridge:—

"Live while you live"—the epicure would say,  
 "And seize the pleasure of the present day:"  
 "Live while you live"—the sacred preacher cries,  
 "And give to God each moment as it flies:"  
 Lord, in my views let both united be;  
*I live in pleasure, when I live to Thee.*

Yes, do you live to God, and, believe me, such will you find genuine piety as regards this present time; and if you look onward, you will even wel-

<sup>1</sup> Ps. cxviii. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. cxlvi. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Prov. xiv. 13.



come the shroud, the coffin, and the worm, as preludes of an existence really worthy of the name ; with calm joy you will anticipate death, as the portal of everlasting life.

Oh ! may He with whom nothing is impossible, and who has ordained, “ by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe,”<sup>1</sup>— may He, for Christ’s sake, be pleased to accomplish in you by His grace that which no words of mine can effect without Him ! May He enable you to see things *as they really are*, and not as our corrupt fancy is so apt to paint them ! Do grant me the satisfaction of assuring myself with regard to many of you, that in purity of living, in modesty of demeanour, in a lowly estimate of yourselves, in your exemplary observance of Sunday, in filial kindness, in all heavenly graces, your conversation will indeed be “ as it becometh the Gospel of Christ : that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel ; and in nothing terrified by your adversaries.”<sup>2</sup> Expect to have to bear a taunt now and then from the careless and godless, among whom you are necessarily thrown ; but “ in your

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. i. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Philip. i. 27, 28.

patience possess ye your souls.”<sup>1</sup> Consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself;<sup>2</sup> and who said to those who suffered greatly more than ever you will be called to submit to, “Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake.”<sup>3</sup> Ask any one who chooses to cavil at your acting up to your conscience, to prove you wrong by any passage in that Gospel, which they profess to believe no less than you. Show to them, by a quiet and gentle firmness, that it must be some more convincing argument than hooting or scurrilous abuse, that shall ever make you swerve from the course which you have chosen to adopt. Should you ever feel sorely tempted to compromise your inward convictions from a dread of that derision, which has ever been the most successful weapon of fools, check your faithless cowardice by asking yourself, “Where in seventy years—perhaps in seven years, maybe even in as many months—will they be, to keep whose patronage I am about to do violence to my conscience, and am willing to forfeit the favour of that Almighty Being above, whose eye is, at this moment, watching me? They and I shall be in the world of spirits. Whose regard shall I *then* think it most important to have

<sup>1</sup> Luke, xxi. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. xii. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. v. 10.

secured? I shall *then* wish to have acted in accordance with my own judgment and sense of duty. The course which I shall then deem to have been best, do Thou, who hearest prayer, enable me now to adopt." Yes, "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?"<sup>1</sup> Keep before your mind that fast-approaching day, when "the righteous man shall stand in great boldness before the face of such as have afflicted him, and made no account of his labours. When they see it they shall be troubled with terrible fear, and shall be amazed at the strangeness of his salvation, so far beyond all that they looked for. And they, repenting and groaning for anguish of spirit, shall say within themselves, 'This was he whom we had some time in derision, and a proverb of reproach. We fools accounted his life madness, and his end to be without honour. How is he numbered among the children of God, and his lot is among the saints!'"<sup>2</sup> I say, "that fast-approaching day;" for although "of that day and that hour knoweth no man,—no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father;"<sup>3</sup> I need scarcely tell you, that to us that day is identical with the day of our death, and "the time is short."

<sup>1</sup> Isa. ii. 22.<sup>2</sup> Wisdom, v. 1-6.<sup>3</sup> Mark, xiii. 32.

PARENTS, do you feel any solicitude as to what shall become of your sons and daughters hereafter?—any concern whether, in their generation, they be a blessing or a curse to themselves, to you, and to society at large? If so, I must solemnly admonish you, for the last time, how much depends upon the character and life which you exhibit before them, and your discretion and firmness in the training of them. Be careful that while young they regularly attend school, especially on every Lord's-day; and, as they grow up to maturity, exert your influence in persuading them to persevere; above all, taking scrupulous heed that what they see in you at home, does not, in any degree, counteract the good there imbibed. Bear in mind that in being instrumental to the birth of each of your children, you have been the means of giving existence to a soul which, once alive, is to live for ever; the education of which soul for God and heaven, is a momentous trust committed to you for fulfilment. Do some of you adequately realize the extent of your responsibility? Listen to a few words at which we all may well tremble, whether parents or not:—"It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him through whom they come! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that

he should offend (do anything to mislead or hinder the salvation of) one of these little ones.”<sup>1</sup> Oh! if on the great day, any of your sons or daughters shall prove heirs of perdition, at least let them not, in the bitterness of their anguish on hearing their doom, be able to point at you with the finger of rancorous scorn, and cry, “To that man and that woman, through whom we ever saw the light, we are indebted for all that now lies before us!” Many of you, during the last five years, have been bereaved of one or more of your children. You felt it hard at the time to part with them. But you stanchd your trickling grief with the solacing assurance, that they were taken away from the evil to come, and had only gone a little while before, whither you hope one day to follow them. This was nature in you; and sincerely do I trust that it spoke the truth in every instance. I would not wound any one needlessly, or open wounds afresh now healed. But better is it to give pain, than be unfaithful. It is certain that mere infants die to bè with the angels; but it is equally certain, that such as live long enough to have committed actual sin, are saved conditionally. He who is cognizant of all in the intermediate state, has made known to us the

<sup>1</sup> Luke, xvii. 1, 2.

frightful truth, that the majority of those who die, pass out of the first into the "second death." "Few there be that find" the gate of life eternal.<sup>1</sup> Put then this enquiry individually to your consciences. "If my dear boy or girl be indeed lost, have I reason, in any respect, to blame myself, as accessory to my own child's ruin? Can he or she bring against me at the Judgment-seat, any valid charge of wilful neglect? Have I taken the trouble of studying the differing dispositions of my children, watching and ascertaining the peculiar tendencies and defects of each one; checking and subduing every evil symptom detected, while fostering and developing every germ of good; adapting my management of them severally, with thoughtful discrimination? Or, have I cared not to bear in mind that the treatment, needful for a strong-willed or turbulent spirit, would break a gentler? Have I dealt out the same rough severity or undue indulgence alike to all of them, according to my own constitutional temper? Have I nothing whereof to accuse myself as regards the manner and degree in which I *corrected* them? Have I not been wanting in *precept*? Have I not still more—yea, most lamentably, most perniciously—erred in the matter

<sup>1</sup> Matt. vii. 14.

of *example*?" Where are the parents who can answer to themselves these questions with a clear conscience? Can one father or mother among you, however piously careful? If you rather feel deeply self-convicted, let me remind you, that great as may be your cause of regret for the past, and although your departed ones are now beyond your power of ever repairing the wrong done *them*,—you can, at least, implore a merciful God's forgiveness of *yourselves*; and take better heed, in the strength of His covenanted grace, to discharge faithfully your responsibilities towards every child remaining to you. Would that each head of a family here present may be able, as he sees his end approaching, to summon his sons and daughters around him in the stillness of his death-chamber, and thus to take his leave of them:—"Behold, I am going the way of all the earth; and you, my children, can testify what my past life and conversation have been. Walk dutifully in your father's footsteps. As long as you live, strictly hallow each returning Lord's-day, as you have seen me do. Neglect no opportunity, as you value your own souls, of attending His worship, and listening to His Gospel. Remember always to beg His protecting care before you go to work; and resort to your chamber, there to kneel down and thank Him for His preservation of you,

immediately on your return home. Spare at least a few minutes each day to read your Bible ; treasure up its blessed precepts, and aim, in a strength higher than your own, to live by them. This (as you, my children, all know) has been *my* habitual practice. Do you the same : so shall your respective ends, like mine, be perfect peace.” Now I ask some of you parents, were you at this moment laid prostrate on a bed of exhaustion and pain—yea, felt a presentiment within you that you were about to close your eyes upon all here below,—could you consistently, could you without awful dissembling, take upon your lips the foregoing language, or any at all like it ? That hour of exchanging of worlds, of last fond looks, and heart-softened impressions, has not yet come, it is true. But some of you who are well stricken in years, as you gaze on the glowing, sprightly faces of grandchildren, already perhaps passing out of youth into manhood or womanhood, cannot but feel that it is fast drawing nigh. Can you glance back over all that has intervened since your own wedding-day, when those grandchildren—yea, their parents likewise—had no being, and not be struck dumb by reflecting on the astounding fleetness with which the period has gone by, and by a realization of the certainty that to you “the night is far spent?” Does not every grey hair, as it shows itself, admonish you that “the



time is short?" Oh! then, make the best use of what may yet remain. So shall your increasing whiteness betoken you increasingly fitted to wear that "crown of righteousness"<sup>1</sup> reserved in heaven for you, not less than for "Paul the aged."<sup>2</sup>

But some of you, my married hearers, have not children. You, however, equally with all parents, wish your state of wedlock to be one of happiness, —of happiness as complete and uninterrupted as is attainable here below. Adopt, then, the means which seem best calculated to produce such a result. Seek happiness in the way wherein it is most commonly found. Where among your neighbours would you look for it? Where cold estrangement, mutual recrimination, and fretful discontent, continually prevail? Where the husband is a drunkard, a domestic tyrant, or an idler? Where the wife is wasteful, a slattern, or a gossip? No: you would look for it in some household where you know that God is feared; and where the husband and the wife emulate each other, only in acting out the pure, unselfish principles of the Gospel; where each most tenderly sympathizes in the other's every joy and sorrow; and not only so, but where both feel for all, as they wish all to feel for them.

May you thus know from personal experience,

<sup>1</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Philem. 9.

not only "how good and how pleasant it is to dwell together in unity,"<sup>1</sup> but how incomparably more blessed to know, that you and your partners are also spiritually united in Christ, alike sharers in His love, co-heirs of heaven! Thus only can your mutually pledged affection be proof against the frequent and various thwartings and vexations of life: thus only will it outlive the transient, chequered state through which you are now passing together. Oh! delightful thought, of being fellow-immortals of the household of God,—to those who know that they cannot hope to live and love together to the last! sweetly consoling thought, whenever you be called to part,—the one to be taken, and the other left! Uncertain is your tenure of each other;—yea, at best, "the time is short."

I cannot, my friends, take leave of you who are married, without beseeching those among you who may hereafter bring your little ones for Baptism, to be particularly careful in your selection of their SPONSORS. I have oftentimes been shocked by the laxity shown in this matter. Perhaps, from sheer negligence and unconcernedness, the requisite number of three has not been obtained. The omission, it was expected, would be overlooked, or treated as unimportant. On being detected, how-

<sup>1</sup> Ps. cxxxiii. 1.

ever, and found fatal to the sacrament being proceeded with, some individual was sure to come forward, and generously volunteer to relieve you in your little difficulty; evidently thinking as much of the act, as he or she would of assisting you with a burden, which prevented you from getting over a stile. Indeed, I have more than once had the unseemly duty forced upon me, of publicly rebuking persons presenting themselves in this capacity;—perhaps some mere youth, whom Satan had taught to esteem it a high mark of manliness, to treat everything connected with religion as unworthy of such as he; and who, therefore, might be seen gazing about him with a vacant flippancy during the celebration of the rite itself, as though he had no part nor concern in the ordinance at which he was standing; and possibly even further outraging the feelings of every right-minded worshipper present, by soon afterwards, with an assumed hardihood, and a jeer on his lip (as though he were doing some great thing), walking out of God's house in the face of the congregation; thus "glorying in his shame."<sup>1</sup> So truly saith the Scripture, "*Fools* make a mock at sin."<sup>2</sup> Believe me, it was with extreme reluctance, and from a conviction of such being my bounden duty, that I

<sup>1</sup> Phil. iii. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Prov. xiv. 9.

ever so spoke out. Nothing would I have uttered unnecessarily to offend any one ; nor am I forgetful of the Apostle Paul's advice to Timothy, "The servant of the Lord must not strive ; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves ; if God, peradventure, will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth ; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will."<sup>1</sup> It affords me, however, sincere satisfaction to acknowledge, that such making light of a holy sacrament has latterly been less frequent ; and that I have remarked at the font a more decorous and attentive demeanour. Moreover, although the Godparents have been so often unsuitable persons, it would certainly be unjust if we ascribed, in every such case, blame to the parents themselves. Doubtless, there has been too much truth in the excuse alleged by some, that they have generally found those of their kinsfolk and friends in whom they could have put entire confidence, so unwilling, that they were unavoidably obliged to accept any less eligible individuals whom they were able to procure.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Tim. ii. 24-26.

But *why this backwardness to assume sponsorial obligations?* I know of no reason but one, which can justify any such of us as are true Christians in declining them, viz. when there is a probability of our being unable, from necessary causes, to fulfil them; as, when we are likely to be wholly or generally separated from our proposed Godchild. Does any one of you who are duly sensible of the delicacy and importance of the duties appertaining to sponsorship, avoid undertaking them from an apprehension of the trouble and inconvenience, which you may thereby bring upon yourself? If you be a Christian in heart, surely you cannot hesitate on that account. You cannot, if you be what you profess, a disciple of Him who enjoins, “As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.”<sup>1</sup> Would you not deem it selfish and unkindly in another, if he or she demurred to render you the like service, and for such a reason? Besides, for whom are you asked to do the service? Through your neighbours’ lips may you not consider yourself accosted by Him who once said, “Suffer little children to come unto me?”<sup>2</sup> And must you not be acting in accordance with the spirit of this expression of

<sup>1</sup> Luke, vi. 31.

<sup>2</sup> Luke, xviii. 16.

His will, when you do anything in your power to assist the young in so coming? And in what more efficacious or more direct way can you do this, than by accepting the position of coadjutor and advising friend to a father and mother, on behalf of their child; and, in case of their decease, looking to it as its parentally-sanctioned protector, and authorized specially to take charge of its religious training. That such a post may occasion you some measure of trouble and anxiety, I admit. But little indeed, at worst, can the sponsor's trust entail upon you, in comparison with the risks and perplexities you must have reckoned upon, had you lived in the early days of the Gospel, when all who professed Christ, were subjected to fiercely cruel persecution at the hands of both Jews and heathen,—persecution which then first necessitated the appointment of Godparents; seeing that infants were continually being deprived of their natural parents by violent deaths; or, through the apostasy of their parents from fear of such deaths, were left in danger of not being brought up as Christians. Still, even had your lot been cast in those times of martyrdom, could you have shrunk from any *duty*, how perilous soever? Could you have hesitated to incur any sort or amount of obligation, *for the sake of Christ*,—even though at the hazard of being

committed to the teeth of wild beasts? Can you now do too much for Him, even though required to wear out your mind and body to promote some other's good?—yes, and even though your efforts should be thankless and in vain? Is not the privilege of being enabled to do *anything* for Him, reward enough amply to compensate you for all the possible unpleasantnesses, and calls for self-denial, to which you may be subjected on account of a soul whom He foreknew and tenderly thought of amid His untold personal sufferings, outside Jerusalem, eighteen centuries ago; and in whom, exalted as He now is amid the beatific glories of heaven, He feels an unceasingly, deeply anxious interest? Can you sincerely pray, “Thy kingdom come,” if you deliberately shirk any opportunity, providentially set before you, for promoting that “kingdom?” I say “providentially;” for you do not solicit the responsibility, but are solicited by others to undertake it. Perhaps you have honestly declined to incur it, through fear of proving unequal to its thorough discharge; and felt absolved by those words of Solomon, “He that hateth suretyship, is sure.”<sup>1</sup> You may have flattered yourself, that this fear was indicative only

<sup>1</sup> Prov. xi. 15.

of your conscientiousness, and lowly opinion of yourself; but permit me to suggest, that it rather manifested your want of faith. God would have you sensible of your utter incompetency to fulfil this, or any other religious duty, by your own power. All He requires of you is, to do as well as you can, calling upon Him for His promised grace to help your infirmities, and make up for your shortcomings. A reluctance in this matter from sincere self-mistrust, however, I believe to be very rare. An assumption of the obligations of sponsorship precipitately and thoughtlessly, is, I am afraid, very common. Too many seem to consider, that the duties of the relation began and ended with their Godchild's baptism. What says the conscience of each one among you, who have undertaken them, respecting the manner in which you have executed the same? As the present is my last opportunity of speaking to you on this highly important subject, it may be profitable for us to spend a few moments, in helping your conscience to arrive at an accurate verdict.

You remember, then, that before quitting the font, the minister admonished you of your duties towards your Godchild. "It is," said he, "your part to see that this infant be taught, so soon as he shall be able to learn, what a solemn vow, promise,



and profession he hath here made by you. And that he may know these things the better, ye shall call upon him to hear Sermons ; and chiefly ye shall provide, that he may learn the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, in the vulgar tongue, and all other things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health ; and that this child may be virtuously brought up to lead a godly and a christian life."<sup>1</sup> Now, of course, you well knew beforehand, that these words of exhortation would be read to you ; and that these duties were to be understood as appertaining to the office, which you were about to undertake. By your coming forward, therefore, and offering yourself as a sponsor, you tacitly acquiesced in the Scriptural authority of them, and voluntarily pledged yourself to fulfil them. Have you acted up to the engagements into which you then entered ? or, have you really thought little or nothing about them since ? Possibly you listened to the Baptismal Service at the time, as a mere matter of form to be gone through, scarcely giving yourself the trouble of articulating the answers. Be assured, however, that the great God above does not view any deliberate act, in which He is

<sup>1</sup> Public Baptism of Infants, Concluding Exhortation.

directly addressed, and in solemn language His blessing is implored, and this done within the hallowed walls of His house, and consequently in His special presence, otherwise than as a serious reality.

Well, then, recollect that, at the sacrament of your Godchild's baptism, you engaged to see that he should "be virtuously brought up to lead a godly and a christian life." Now, it may be that the father and the mother of your Godchild have cared little or nothing about religion in themselves; and therefore have cared as little about religion in their offspring, and have left the task of parental discipline to Satan and to chance. Aware of such being the case, how have you acted? Have you relieved your conscience by kindly, yet earnestly and firmly, expostulating with them as to their cruel negligence towards their own flesh and blood? Or, have you not deemed it necessary to trouble yourself about the matter, as one for which the parents have to answer, not you? If so, for what use or purpose did you stand sponsor for their child? Was it only to do them a friendly turn that you consented, knowing that yourself or some one else *must* stand, or there could be no baptism? Alas! your heavy responsibilities have been not the less, because of having been thus thoughtlessly

undertaken. Or, maybe, the improper manner of your Godchild's bringing-up has been often, very often, a subject of painful concern to you; and sometimes you have felt that you *really ought* to say something to the parents; but you have never been able to bring yourself to express your sentiments to them, assured that they would take it as puritanical meddling on your part, and that your interference would do no good: besides, you did not like to offend them; as they were, after all, a good sort of people, and you had been acquainted with them so long. But is this being faithful to your obligations as their child's sponsor? Is it not, rather, a selfish consideration of your own personal ease and convenience, in preference to the soul's well-being of the little one, whom you undertook before God to see, as far as in you lay, "virtuously brought up to lead a godly and a christian life?" Is not this to set practically a higher value on keeping the regard of man—yes, even of the careless and wicked,—than on proving faithful to that God whom you yourself profess to serve, who witnessed all the proceeding when you undertook the responsibilities of a Godparent; and who, moreover, has given us all (whether sponsors or not), this general injunction,—“Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon

him.”<sup>1</sup> In kindly counselling the father and mother of your Godchild, you are simply discharging one of the plain duties of the very office which they themselves asked you to fill,—a duty which they were well aware strictly belongs to that office (for, as I said, it is a duty distinctly specified in the Baptismal Service); and can they, then, reasonably conceive offence at your so doing? If *they* choose to look upon what took place at the baptism of their infant, as a mere form, never meant to be acted upon, *you* are not justified, therefore, in thinking the same. Every one of us has to bear his own burden. Each has to give account for himself at the Judgment.

But you also engaged to see, so far as in you lay, that your Godchild should learn “all things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul’s health;” in other words, that he be sent to school. If, then, you have found his parents very careless in this particular, suffering him on the merest pretext, or without any at all, to waste the precious seed-time of his life in idle play, only picking up thoughts and words of wickedness; what notice have you taken of the fact? Have you left the poor lad to serve on his apprenticeship

<sup>1</sup> Lev. xix. 17.

for hell, without an effort for his timely rescue? “Timely,” I say, knowing well how very hard, how very rare a thing it is, for any one grown up amid bad influences, and in habitual contempt of God and Gospel restraints, to be won out of the fangs of Satan in after-life. If you have neglected, through indolence or thoughtlessness, to speak out, and your Godchild perish,—will no portion, think you, of the blood of his murdered soul rest upon *your* head, who promised here, in the presence of Almighty God and a Sabbath congregation, that so far as your influence and exertions would avail, you would see that his parents did their duty towards him?

Again. You tacitly pledged yourself to “call upon” your Godchild “to hear sermons.” In other words, you undertook to take diligent heed that he should regularly attend church. If he has been duly sent to the Sunday-school, he, of course, has been brought up hither along with his fellow-scholars. But, possibly, he has never found his way to school: he is one of those neglected ones, whom I have frequently observed from the vestry-window, loitering away the hours of public worship, in want of amusement, on the opposite Down; his natural guardians and guides ignorant where they are, and not caring to know; for these were occu-

pied elsewhere, according to their respective instincts,—perhaps snarling at each other in the family den. But you have undertaken to be that poor boy's surety: you, when he was borne to that font in the innocence of unconscious babyhood, engaged that as he grew up to discern good and evil, you would "call upon" him "to hear sermons." Have you ever opened your mouth to his godless parents, in reference to their son's neglect of the preaching of the Gospel? "It needed no soothsayer (you may reply) to foretell the result of remonstrance on such a subject, in such a quarter." Have you, then, ever kindly taken himself by the hand, and (putting up a silent prayer that the Holy Spirit would touch his young heart, and assist your effort) sought, in every way and by every token of tender sincerity, to bring him along with you to within sound of God's wondrous message to man?

Let me remind you, at that font you promised "to see that he be taught, so soon as he should be able to learn, what a solemn vow, promise, and profession he had there made by you." Accordingly, in default of his parents doing so, it has been your part to instruct him that, in your person, this question was proposed to him, "Wilt thou obediently keep God's holy will and com-

mandments, and walk in the same all the days of thy life?" and that his answer by your mouth was, "I will." It has been your duty to show him that one of these commandments is, "Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath-day." But thou that teachest another to keep holy the Sabbath, dost *thou* keep it holy? How and where have *you* spent the forenoon of to-day? Another Divine Commandment, and therefore one which he vowed by you to obey, is, "Do this in remembrance of me." Have you been able, without inconsistency, to urge and explain to him the obligation of this commandment? or, have you forborne from all mention of it; being too well aware that you might at once have been met with the enquiry, "If attendance at the ordinance of worship to which this commandment relates, be so imperative and fitting, how is it that *you*, my Godfather, constantly disregard it?"

An existing law of the church requires, that none be admitted to the responsible Office of sponsor who are not communicants; it having been reasonably considered, that they who possess such an inadequate sense of religion, as disobedience to their Saviour's dying injunction seems to imply, are persons very unfit to be entrusted with the business of seeing that another duly fulfils *his*

religious obligations.<sup>1</sup> Let me, then, ask those of you who have become sureties for others at baptism, and yet have always been, and still are, living in neglect of that other sacrament, the Lord's Supper,—on what ground do you justify your neglect? Do you allege the trite plea that you are not good enough to join in this act of worship? Then why are you not? Do you consider any of those fit who do regularly participate in it? You must admit that some of them are. Then by what means have they become fit? By any means which are not equally in *your* power? If you are not now qualified to appear at the Lord's Table, when do you expect to be so? Do you intend ever to seek the grace which alone can qualify you? Or, do you think it really unimportant, if in such an extra-routine matter, you choose to be somewhat remiss, or even entirely regardless? Is it your opinion that you do quite enough to please God,—as much as will conciliate Him,—by being present generally at His ordinary worship? Now I will not argue with you about the incompatibility of such a notion, with a feeling of the boundless gratitude and love which you owe to God: I merely entreat you to consider, whether in thus

<sup>1</sup> Note N.



acting, you are safe. The language of Christ, in whom you profess to trust for eternity, is direct and distinct:—“*Do this* in remembrance of me.” Do not these words constitute as plain a command as any in the Decalogue? Do they leave the observance of the Lord’s Supper at all optional? In the Scriptural accounts of one and the same event, differences are sometimes noticeable; even the words, uttered on the occasion, are not given uniformly alike; and an omission of one sacred writer is supplied by another. Now the evangelists Matthew,<sup>1</sup> Mark,<sup>2</sup> and Luke,<sup>3</sup> describe the manner of the institution of the Lord’s Supper; St. Paul<sup>4</sup> also gives his version. In any of the four narrations, is there added to the command for its observance, something to this effect,—“If you do not think it superfluous, or if it happen to suit your inclinations?” To no command in the Bible is such a proviso annexed. Can you seriously believe, that the Divine Redeemer of us sinners would be guilty of such trifling, in that awfully affecting hour, when He was about to submit Himself to unknown agonies for our sole benefit, as to ordain a rite for us to keep,—specially and expressly, in commemoration of His self-sacrifice for

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxvi. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Mark, xiv. 22.

<sup>3</sup> Luke, xxii. 19.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. xi. 24.

us, in testimony of our adoring devoted reliance upon Him as our only Hope of salvation, as an open decided confession of Him before a rebellious, thankless world,—and enjoining, “Do this in remembrance of me,”—all the while intending to consider it of little or no moment, whether so loving, so faith-testing a requirement were ever complied with or not? You presume not to avow such a thought; you cannot entertain it. Call to mind then what St. James says,—“Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.”<sup>1</sup> If any man wilfully slights any one known rule or precept in his Bible, he cannot be honestly sincere in his seeming obedience to every other.

But others of you have conscientiously abstained. It is not unlikely that some are unto this day influenced in so doing by a motive, which is deserving of respect, though founded on an error, which I have repeatedly endeavoured by explanation to remove. You have been deterred by a few strong expressions in the Exhortation read at the time of Communion, suggested by the eleventh chapter of St. Paul’s first Epistle to the Corinthians, and introduced with a design of checking all irre-

<sup>1</sup> James, ii. 10.

verence, or presumptuous trifling with the ordinance. In the apostolic age, when miracles were needed and common, God saw fit to make examples of some of the members of the Corinthian Church, for their gross abuse of the Lord's Supper, in making it a common meal, and even indulging in excess. "For in eating (writes St. Paul) every one taketh before his own supper; and one is hungry and another is drunken. What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in?"<sup>1</sup> In chastisement for this conduct, they found themselves smitten with diseases, from which not all were permitted to recover. This sacrament, as now-a-days administered, can scarcely be profaned in the same manner.<sup>2</sup>

Maybe, however, without having at all examined the Office itself, you entertain indefinite superstitious scruples about taking part in this particular act of worship; thinking that unless a man has made up his mind to become a thorough saint, his safest course is to keep clear of it. Is then every man left free to choose, whether or not he will be a decided Christian? Perhaps you misapprehend what is needed to qualify any one to appear at the Lord's Table. In the Exhortation to which I have alluded, all is very simply and con-

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xi. 21, 22.

<sup>2</sup> Note O.

cisely summed up thus :—“ Repent you truly for your sins past ; have a lively and steadfast faith in Christ our Saviour ; amend your lives ; and be in perfect charity with all men ; so shall ye be meet partakers of those holy mysteries.” What is mentioned here which is not indispensable in order to your joining acceptably in the ordinary Services of a Sabbath ? Have you been praying sincerely the prayers of this afternoon ? If so, at the outset you besought the Almighty to “ have mercy upon you, miserable offenders ;” you begged of Him, “ for Christ’s sake, that you may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life ;” and you asked Him to “ forgive you your trespasses, as you forgive them that trespass against you.” One other qualification is added :—“ Above all things, ye must give most humble and hearty thanks to God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, for the redemption of the world by the death and passion of our Saviour Christ, both God and man.” Well ; you have this afternoon declared to the Almighty, “ We bless Thee \* \* \* above all, for Thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.” Now, if you have in earnest uttered these few sentences ; if, at this moment, they express deep feelings and desires of your heart, you seem

to possess the four requisites specified in the Exhortation. "Draw near with faith, and take this holy Sacrament to your comfort." If you have not these feelings and desires, draw not near: it is not for you, in your present state, "spiritually to eat the flesh of Christ, and drink His blood." But, oh! rest not in your present state; for, be assured, that so long as you are really unfit to unite in the Lord's Supper, you are utterly unfit to die. You may call yourself a Christian; but Christ does not acknowledge you, seeing that you do not love Him: for, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me," saith the Saviour.<sup>1</sup> "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."<sup>2</sup>

In what has been just advanced, I of course do not mean to assert, that every one who communicates, is therefore necessarily fit to be a sponsor. The most exemplary attendance on all ordinances of public worship, is no certain proof of an individual being a good Christian in daily life. No, my brother, you may be a most regular church-comer; you may esteem yourself a very pious man; and yet be discovered lamentably wanting, if weighed in the Gospel balances.

<sup>1</sup> John, xiv. 21.

<sup>2</sup> John, xv. 14.

Within your home, we may find that you ask God's blessing, and render Him thanks, at every meal; that you daily assemble your family around you for social devotion; that you are careful to send your children to school; that you enforce obedience and sound discipline in all under your roof: and truly nothing can be more excellent and Scriptural than such things, as far as they go; and they cannot be disregarded without sin. But may they not be done, after all, not from a strictly pure motive, or in a right spirit? Ah! a man may do all this; and yet, for instance, be far from treating his wife with becoming kindness; consulting her comfort under all circumstances; denying himself in every way with fond readiness, rather than that she should suffer, or be caused trouble; in short, be far from loving her as his own flesh,<sup>1</sup> and even as Christ loveth His Church, and gave Himself for it.<sup>2</sup> He may be so far from showing that consideration for her, implied in his nuptial vow of "honouring" her, that he may rather view her only in the light of his personal slave, just as the untutored savage does; feeling himself privileged to act the petty tyrant towards her, in virtue of himself being the stronger; with bearish morose-

<sup>1</sup> Eph. v. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Eph. v. 25.

ness, or irascible violence requiring in her implicit subserviency to his every humour and caprice, however unreasonable. And, also, the wife, on her part, instead of a winning anticipation of his every lawful wish, a considerate allowance for his peculiar infirmities, a mild and quiet submission to his more flagrant shortcomings, even though his be a selfish, peevish, and domineering spirit,—instead, in short, of a dutiful subjection to her wedded partner “in everything,”<sup>1</sup> according to her bridal vow, and looking up to him as her head, even as Christ is the Head of His Church,<sup>2</sup>—she may, while exacting equally as he, rigid subjection from her children, be herself subject to her husband in nothing; from a mistaken view of her position, or of her interest, or from an idea of her own superior cleverness, constantly contending for, and usurping that authority<sup>3</sup> which God never designed for her; at least since the day when Eve was first in the transgression, and the sentence was passed upon her, “Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.”<sup>4</sup>

If such be any of you, as husbands, wives, or parents, in your own homes,—however well you outwardly appear to commence each week, by

<sup>1</sup> Eph. v. 24.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Tim. ii. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Eph. v. 23.

<sup>4</sup> Gen. iii. 16.

spending a great portion of its Sabbath within your accustomed place of worship, the whole time so spent by you during the past five years, has been worse than wasted time. As regards *yourselves*, you evidence by your fruits (the surest of proof) that you have not derived improvement therefrom; and consequently, it is to be feared, have only been rendered less susceptible of a real change of heart. As regards *others*, who can say how many of your neighbours you have been the occasion of confirming in their open, God-defiant ways! who can tell how many, inclining to become Christians, have been thrown back by contemplating the transparent hollowness of your Sunday rigour,—the want of agreement of your home-life with your Sunday pretensions! No, though we cannot “forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is,”<sup>1</sup> without offending Him who hath commanded, “Ye shall keep my Sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the Lord,”<sup>2</sup>—still, we must never allow ourselves to forget, that the whole of religion is not comprised in fulfilling this single duty. A principal purpose of your attendance here ought to be, that you may mend your practice, and live up to what you learn.

<sup>1</sup> Heb. x. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Lev. xxvi. 2.



Be this your purpose henceforward : and so, humbly and teachably listen (remembering whose words they are which you hear), whenever the Book of Truth is read,—frankly and candidly ponder every portion of the same, as expounded and applied—by him who shall succeed me in ministering to your souls. Indeed, “we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you : and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake.”<sup>1</sup> But beware lest unconsciously you frequent church, out of regard for the ambassador rather than the message,—out of love for man more than for God. Do not disappoint his fond hopes by appearing unanimously seized with a sudden concern about the one thing needful, for a few weeks at first ; and then betraying the unreality of your “revival,” by one after another contenting yourselves with an occasional visit to this house of God, or perhaps discontinuing to appear at all, as the newness of my successor’s voice and presence shall necessarily wear off. I confess that I am strongly suspicious of the results of so-called “revivals” in general. Whether good or evil predominate in those results, is no question with

<sup>1</sup> 1 Thess. v. 12, 13.

me. Can none of you recollect scandalous consequences having transpired within a few months after a "revival?" Be not too hasty in believing in the genuineness of any reported sudden conversion. He who is "the Truth," has said, "By their fruits ye shall know them." Tried by this test, has not a little time proven in too many instances, that such "conversions" have been merely the dreams of enthusiasm, or the pretences of imposture? Have none of you ever heard of an individual, represented to have been "converted" from his reprobate courses many times within a very brief period? Ah! does not a "conversion" too frequently resemble the fungus in its growth and value, much more than the wheat-seed, showing gradually first the tender blade, then the stem, then the ear, then the full grain ripening for the heavenly garner? Beware of being carried away by the too common delusion, that warm and lively feelings constitute the essence of religion. Imagine not that a tongue, ever voluble and ready with scriptural words and phrases, is a necessary token of genuine holiness. Cant is but too often a cloak for immorality. A man's lips may be most Christian, while his heart is heathen—a very palace of Satan. Doubtless, if you be a believer in earnest, you will be fond of occasional serious converse with

others like-minded, especially with any more advanced Christian than yourself: but, remember, you may find pleasure in discussion on points of religion, and be nevertheless only gratifying a carnal vanity. You may possess an intimate and accurate acquaintance with your Bible, and be able to talk with consummate acuteness and nicety about justification, sanctification, or predestination; and yet yours may be only that "knowledge" which "puffeth up."<sup>1</sup> I have said, neglect no ordinance of God's house, unless of necessity, by reason of illness or other unavoidable detention. At the same time, those lips which here on a Sabbath you use in prayers and hymns, be careful you do not misuse during the week. "If any man among you (says St. James) seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain."<sup>2</sup> Of course what is here declared respecting men, is equally true of women. Be you advised, my female hearers, by what another apostle complains to Timothy concerning some of your sex in his day,— "And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also, and busybodies, speaking things which

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. viii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Jam. i. 26.

they ought not.”<sup>1</sup> Be cautious again of supposing that if you acquire a taste for hearing sermons, you therein possess a decisive sign of your soul’s health. I fear that very many go about to places of worship, actuated by not a whit higher motive than what influences others, in towns, to frequent the theatre. What wonder if each class of persons return home equally unblessed? Do not look upon all as undoubtedly renewed persons, whom you hear often giving vent to groans and piously-worded ejaculations,—most frequently in time of worship, to signify their approval of this or that passage of the discourse; though it is a habit of some who are undeniably so. View not any man (even though he be wholly uneducated) as a saint, just because he displays facility, or even eloquence, in uttering the language of prayer. This may be, in such an one, merely the exercise of a natural power; and is not more necessarily to be ascribed to the influence of the Holy Spirit, than is the exhibition of effective speaking by any unlettered artisan on a political platform. Fluency in prayer may be a spiritual grace, or nothing more than a mental talent, enjoyed by the possessor in common with, no doubt, many a scribe of old. Which of the two it is, can

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. v. 13.

only be decided by evidences drawn from his life. You may, again, have heard individuals who seem to look upon themselves as belonging to "the elect," presume to address the Most High with a torrent of vulgar familiarity; yea, to storm the throne of the Eternal with a continuous volley of expostulatory rant, which they perhaps would call "wrestling in the Spirit." Very unlike are these would-be favourites of heaven to holy Abraham, "the friend of God;"<sup>1</sup>—"Behold now (saith he), I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes."<sup>2</sup> Be not of those who put on sanctity with the Sunday suit, and appear to think smoothness of exterior a substitute in God's sight for purity and charity of heart. Never put that interpretation on another's acts or words, which you would deem unjustifiable if applied to like conduct on your parts. Whenever tempted to condemn another severely, each of you reflect thus:—"How can I reckon myself competent to pass a really accurate judgment on the conduct of any fellow-sinner? It is utterly impossible that I can be perfectly acquainted with all the circumstances of his case. I cannot possibly know the precise strength of tendency to this or

<sup>1</sup> Isa. xli. 8. Jam. ii. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. xviii. 27.

that sin with which he was born—the degree of infirmity in this or that particular, which he has inherited from his parents; and, therefore, how can I determine the exact measure in which he is accountable for such conduct as that, for which I am blaming him?” Beware of being familiar with all your neighbour’s failings, without caring to examine what failings and faults your neighbour may see in you. We may meet with persons in every place who, in sanctimonious tone, are always full of complainings concerning the wickedness around them; but who are very ill-pleased indeed, and prepared with abundant excuses, should you venture to remind them of home-shortcomings, patent to all, themselves excepted. Be you careful rather to ascertain thoroughly, that there is no mire left unswept from your own doors. Study continually the spotless character of Him who hath set us an example, that we should follow His steps. This will help you in discovering the truth. Dare not to make yourselves of the number of some who, only “measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.”<sup>1</sup> Those of you who are thirsting for a peace which the world does not afford, and have become half inclined to seek it in religion, be not

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. x. 12.

nauseated, be not repelled from acting out your wise intention, by any religionists who, by their abuse of religion, make it ridiculous or offensive; *e.g.*, modern Pharisees, of whom there are not a few,—men and women, who, trusting in themselves that they are righteous, say by their look, if not with their lips, to all who happen not to be of their own fraternity, “Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou.”<sup>1</sup> Rather learn from such self-deluded people, how much more right and reasonable, how much more befitting us fallen creatures, is the frame prescribed by one who had whereof to boast, if ever man had, “In lowliness of mind, let each esteem other better than himself.”<sup>2</sup> “If a man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.”<sup>3</sup> And what saith He who came down from heaven, who spake that which He knew, and testified that which He had seen? He called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of His disciples, and said, “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”<sup>4</sup> Beware of a love of prominency and leadership, in even the best

<sup>1</sup> Isa. lrv. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Philip. ii. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Gal. vi. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. xviii. 3, 4.

of causes. How much fancied "zeal for the Lord" is in reality zeal for self! Be active for God to the utmost extent of your power and opportunities; but let not your left hands know what your right hands do. Be not like some who are perpetually trumpeting their own praises. "Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth."<sup>1</sup> "Not he that commendeth himself, is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth."<sup>2</sup> The piety of some is expended in an exceeding jealousy for God's honour, and a passionate ardour in spiritually benefiting others—in public. Let your piety specially show itself, in your manner of life in privacy. If it do this, it will not fail to manifest itself in public likewise. Let it be seen to leaven your conversation and demeanour amidst your family, during the hours of week-day leisure. Then may it be expected, as of course, to modify and Christianize your household arrangements and usages. Hypocrisy or formalism—it is true, as I have reminded you already—*may* do this, religion *will*. It will, for instance, constrain you to show whom you serve, by the seemly practice of "saying grace." Thus in presence of your domestic circle, to make an express acknowledgment of God's providential

<sup>1</sup> Prov. xxvii. 2.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. x. 18.



goodness towards you and them, on partaking of your principal meal, is as little as you can do, if you would act at all according to the precept of the apostle Paul, "In everything give thanks;"<sup>1</sup> and of whom we read that, during the shipwreck at Melita, "he took bread, and *gave thanks* to God in presence of them all; and when he had broken it, he began to eat."<sup>2</sup> Of One greater than St. Paul it is recorded, that, when about miraculously to feed five thousand men, "Jesus took the loaves; and when He had *given thanks*, He distributed to the disciples."<sup>3</sup> When He fed the four thousand persons, "He took the seven loaves, and *gave thanks*, and brake, and gave to His disciples to set before them."<sup>4</sup> Also in instituting the sacrament of His Supper, "He took bread, and *gave thanks*, and brake it."<sup>5</sup> If such was the custom of Him who is our Pattern of holiness, shall you or I be doing more than our duty, if in this as in all other points, we, like His apostle, imitate Him? Moreover, commence—those of you who have not already,—the godly practice of Family Worship. Until you have tried it, you can little estimate its utility; you cannot credit how greatly it would help to introduce and maintain order and content, mutual affec-

<sup>1</sup> 1 Thess. v. 18. Col. iii. 17. Eph. v. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Acts, xxvii. 35.

<sup>3</sup> John, vi. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Mark, viii. 6.

<sup>5</sup> Luke, xxii. 19.

tion and forbearance, among all under your roof. Do not object that the thing is impracticable, the nature of your calling obliging you to be usually absent at the time most proper for its performance. Suffice it that some of your neighbours, engaged in the same calling, *do* observe it,—and with unbroken regularity. “When there is a will, there is a way.” Make a beginning. Even if prevented yourselves, at least your wives can fulfil the duty as your deputies. In this, as in everything, take into account the influence of habit. A practice once begun, is usually continued with more and more easiness, till ere long it cannot be discontinued, or even interrupted, without doing violence to one’s feelings. Turn this principle of our nature to the good use, which it is implanted to serve. Beware of its being in the case of any one of you a means of evil. Beware of permitting yourselves to contract any bad, or even doubtful habit. And, my friends, I cannot dismiss you on this occasion, I cannot terminate my ministry here, without making a final protest against one habit in particular,—a habit too common everywhere, and which prevails generally in the colliery districts of Somersetshire. I allude to the custom of lying late in bed on the Lord’s day. It is most probable that some of you before me have been wont thus

to indulge in sloth, on the plea of needful repose after the week's hard work ; while many others, lower in the moral scale, do the very same, by way of slumbering off the effects of their drunken, noisy revelry of the previous evening. Oh, that you may become satisfied from happy experience, that the hallowed and thoughtful, the quiet and sedentary employments of God's Sabbath—prayer, praise, the listening to His Word, and a convenient measure of reading of it with self-scrutiny at home,—serve in themselves as a recreative refreshment of exhausted physical strength ! May you become sensible that such profane laziness is really most unworthy of Christian people ; and indeed hardly compatible with any genuine earnestness in religion,—whether you profess yourselves Churchmen or Wesleyans ! May you, under this conviction, get accustomed to quit your pillows, as soon as nature has received its full and requisite measure of sleep, and be found betimes upon your knees at your bedsides, suitably preparing yourselves for the appropriate business of the day ! And may the Sabbath morn be witnessed by the oldest person present, when the congregational worship for which you shall all be thus devoutly making ready your hearts in private, shall be one and the same,—even the ancient and spiritual Li-

turgy of our Established Church ;—a Church which I conscientiously esteem the safest of all earthly guides to heaven, the strongest of Britain's bulwarks, and the surest guarantee for her pre-eminence among the nations. Revere it, prize it, be thankful for it : at the same time, be not content with deeming yourselves members of a truly Scriptural Church ; while knowing perhaps little more concerning the same, than that you have been brought up in it. “ Be ready always (as St. Peter counsels you) to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.”<sup>1</sup> Not only so, make it your day-by-day endeavour to act up to the orthodox creed which you providentially hold ; show your faith by your works : so that observing the excellency of your manner of life, men may “ report that God is in you of a truth.”<sup>2</sup> Let the religion of none of you be of the popular superficial sort,—a religion which costs nothing, and pays nothing ; let yours be of the kind which is rare indeed, but alone of any value—a religion whose foundations are laid deep in secret prayer, in searchings of heart, and single-minded consultations of God's Word ; not picking and choosing for yourselves

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. iii. 15.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. xiv. 25.

just such portions of that Word as are most palatable; but practically, as well as professedly, receiving the whole as from God; and as cordially and gratefully taking warning from one chapter, as drawing comfort from another; humbly and honestly desirous, that every passage shall have its due influence upon your hearts. Be it your fixed resolution, that while “fools make a mock at sin,” and the “whole world lieth in wickedness,”<sup>1</sup> you at least will devote yourselves unreservedly and entirely to that Almighty Friend in the heavens, to whom you owe everything that you have or hope for. May He “make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”<sup>2</sup>

But it is necessary that I conclude. And in doing so, what can I say better than beseech you all in the name of Christ, to reflect each day you may have to live, that “the time is short:”—a truth as undeniable and important to us at this day, as when St. Paul impressed it upon the converts of the opulent and dissolute city of Corinth.

Affectingly brief does *our* probationary term

<sup>1</sup> 1 John, v. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. xiii. 21.

appear, when we recall to mind the continuance upon earth once vouchsafed to mankind. Turn to that simple record of the early days of the world—the fifth chapter of Genesis. Among the list of antediluvian elders there given, we find seven mentioned as having had a trial of more than nine hundred years allotted to them; whereas, (to cite Moses's words), “The days of our age are threescore years and ten; and though men be so strong that they come to fourscore years, yet is their strength then but labour and sorrow; so soon passeth it away, and we are gone.”<sup>1</sup> But how few of those who lie silent beneath the adjacent greensward, lived to see that number of years! Nor is it likely will many of you, their survivors. Pensively may you have been observed on a Sabbath, moving among their flower-bedecked graves<sup>2</sup> (no names to indicate your departed ones, affection needing none), and oft doubtless have you offered a sigh to their memory; but have the dead never seemed to speak to you—“the time is short?”

Well can most of you recollect the day, when the foundation of this house of prayer was laid: but well do you know also, that when yourselves, your children, and your children's children, shall

<sup>1</sup> Ps. xc. 10: Prayer-book Version.

<sup>2</sup> Note P.

long have mingled with your kindred dust, still will this same edifice be standing — the centre of a preached Gospel, and resounding with the voice of melody. And what does such a reflection teach? That even compared with the work of man's own hands, how frail is man himself! — that verily to each of us "the time is short."

Before the commencement of our Sabbath worship, often have I noticed some of you standing on a little knoll outside, gazing abroad on the wide fair landscape commanded from this elevated site; far distant objects glistening in the rays of the midday sun, which shone forth high and cloudless, from the azure immensity overhead. Our worship over, I have watched you, on a summer eve, sauntering at will, and inhaling the pure unchecked breeze on the open Down behind us, as the sun, serenely grand, sank below the western horizon, bathing hill and valley in its golden splendour; the little songsters of the air seeming to share in the joyousness of its parting beams, and, before going to rest, offering up their notes of thanksgiving. Doubtless, at such hours, you have felt within you a gladsome buoyancy of spirits: but has the thought never crossed your minds — "All this manifestation of our glorious Maker's handiwork, of His power and goodness, is but for

a season?" Alas! for the effects of sin! "The time is short; and the fashion of this world passeth away." Yes, "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also and the works that are therein, shall be burned up. Seeing, then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?"<sup>1</sup>

Once more. What shall we say of the circumstances, under which you are listening to me? Is not the present providential severing of the sacred relation which has for some years subsisted between us, a practical comment on our text? As regards myself, I consider that no event of my life has taught me so impressively, so painfully, the wisdom of the apostle's advice; the mutability of this our temporal state; the utter uncertainty of the tenure of earthly enjoyments: the ensnaring nature of earthly associations. How often have I, while tending the formation of the adjacent grounds,—how often when subsequently noting the growth of each individual plant or tree,—fondly anticipated the day when I should see the whole

<sup>1</sup> 2 Pet. iii. 10, 11.



in full maturity, the conception of my fancy realized,—a source of recreative pleasure to myself for my remaining life, and to all of you who might choose to visit them; and that at length, in God's own time, having "finished my course," this tower would sound forth my death-knell, and in some spot among the mounds hard-by, my dust would sleep with yours until the Resurrection! But though a "man deviseth his way," One there is above who ordereth all things according to His own sovereign will;—ordereth everything for every individual of all the millions of this globe, as minutely as though each person were the only one existing. He can judge more wisely for us, than we corrupt creatures would for ourselves; and often does He see fit, therefore, to frustrate us in our dearest wishes. My conscience bears me witness, that it is my most ardent desire to discharge with fidelity the office of a parish priest: but "No: (says the Almighty), you long to be actively employed in my service; I will test the sincerity of your devotedness to me, by exercising your resignation and patience." He accordingly withholds from me the requisite health. His will be done! This discipline, trying though it be, I am convinced is the very discipline best for my own soul; and I feel that I have great cause of thankfulness for the

measure of success with which we have been blessed. Though deeply grieved by the falling away of some, and the persevering hardihood of so many, truly have I been gratified by clear evidences of progressive religion in others. "These defend, O Lord, with thy heavenly grace, that they may continue thine for ever ; and daily increase in thy Holy Spirit more and more, until they come unto thine everlasting kingdom."<sup>1</sup> I have become acquainted with fellow-disciples—fellow-travellers to the same eternal home,—whom I should otherwise have never known in the flesh ; but whom henceforward I shall hold in dear recollection, while life and memory last. Oh, the consolation derivable from the thought of "the communion of saints !" When parted from those to whom we are knit in Christ, our best affections, my friends, will still be fixed on the same Object ; our most ardent hopes and energies be devoted to the same end ; and our sympathies with those no longer seen, may be kept burning by mutual remembrance in prayer. Yes, "brethren, pray for us."<sup>2</sup> Oh ! if St. Paul could ask this of the converts at Thessalonica for himself and his fellow-apostles, how incomparably more needful must be *your* prayers for such an one as

<sup>1</sup> Order of Confirmation.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Thess. v. 25 ; Col. iv. 3 ; 2 Thess. iii. 1.

myself. Pray for him who is leaving you ; pray for him who shall come in my room ; pray for your own selves. Prayer is the secret of spiritual advancement. Prayer is the thermometer, the criterion of religion in the soul. If, as individuals, you thus pray importunately and from the heart in secret, you will delight in meeting together to pray here in company every Lord's-day ; whose return you will welcome as a holy breathing-time,—the stated well whereat, after a seven-days' march, fellow-pilgrims gather in the same desert of life, and on the same heavenward journey, to renew their worn strength, to learn their route, and refresh their spirits. You will love the weekly sound of the Sabbath bell, which bids you come up to the house of the Lord, as the sweetest music you ever hear ; for on this blessed day you come to hold converse, in His own temple, with Him who hath said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."<sup>1</sup> You come to join in united praises to One, to whom you owe more than tongue can tell. You come to benefit and edify your souls ;—to acquire meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light, which every Sabbath you know to be another week

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xviii. 20.

nearer. May all of you be sincere in thus coming, and you shall never go empty away. May you thus be a people distinguished, not only for your special hallowing of the Lord's day, but for your godly unity, your strict Gospel consistency, and unblameable holiness of life. May you thus be boldly distinct epistles of Christ, known and read of all around. In fine, may you thus individually live, as you will each desire to have lived, whenever you be called to die.

And oh! to every careless man or woman here to-day, I must say again, once for all, "Delay not until death to be wise." Let not Satan befool one of you longer. "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"<sup>1</sup> Resolve, from this very hour, in dependence on promised help from above, to live, as boundless cause of gratitude, a common-sense regard for your highest interests, and your own serious vow at Confirmation, combine to dictate. "O taste and see how gracious the Lord is; blessed is the man that trusteth in Him."<sup>2</sup> There are those who, from actual experience, can testify that you shall not be disappointed in so doing. The world may beguile you with false hopes; and it is the wont of the god of this world to lie, and

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xvi. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. xxxiv. 8. (Prayer-book Version.)

to deceive his dupes for his own fell purposes. But not so One who hath given Himself to die for your sakes. No : cast yourselves in humble faith unreservedly upon Him, not only for eternity, but for time ; seeking in Him alone, and in obedience to His pure precepts, your happiness,—not only beyond the grave, but in the life that now is. Then, though I cannot pledge you exemption from any of the natural ills of humanity, you shall be enabled to meet and bear them in a strength not your own, with a serenity to which you are now strangers. You shall enjoy a peace of mind and solid satisfaction, which nothing earthly can either impart or deprive you of ; you shall receive your summons hence with well-founded comfort ; and shall at length close your eyes upon all here below, to open them within the mansions of your everlasting home above : having left behind the society of frail fellow-sinners, for the companionship of perfected saints ; the bread, maybe, of affliction, for the spiritual manna, even angels' food ; and the garments of poverty, for the white robes of the blest, and diadems of glory. Yea, you shall exchange wearing toil in the dark bowels of the earth for endless rest and peace—a fulness of joy, a perfection of happiness, such as Adam never knew

in Paradise. "As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."<sup>1</sup>

My friends, of His infinite grace and mercy, this *may* be your portion hereafter, and mine. Then *let it be*. All of us living, and breathing, and looking one upon another here to-day, will drop into our graves, each in his or her appointed time, but in what order we know not. Not only will this pulpit be occupied by another speaker, but your seats will be filled by another generation. I shall have completed my ministry elsewhere, and be silent in dust. Each of you will have had your allotted term of trial, and disappeared. We shall meet again. And *why* should we not, one and all, recognize and greet each other at the Judge's right hand? Surely *we will*. So shall our connexion of the past five years not this day cease,—*never* cease: but as we have united in our praises here below, these same voices of ours shall join in singing together the anthem of the redeemed with the Church triumphant above;—where "they that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament;

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. ii. 9.

and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.”<sup>1</sup>

And now, “ Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect ; be of good comfort ; be of one mind ; live in peace ; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dan. xii. 3.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. xiii. 11.

## NOTES.

---

### A.

Clandown Church is fitted up with open benches throughout, and all free. Can it be in accordance with the mind of Christ that any of our churches are otherwise? Can it be ingenuously affirmed by the most cordial friend of the Church of England, that therein, as regards personal accommodation, "the *poor* have the Gospel preached to them?"<sup>1</sup> Would it not be a lamentably ironical motto, if written over most of our church porches, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money?"<sup>2</sup> What marvel that so very small a minority of the poor attend our public worship, so long as they find themselves herded together out of the way, under galleries, and in every least eligible portion of the building; so far removed, perhaps, from the desk and pulpit, as to hear an entire sentence only now and then? And why this treatment of them? To make room for those who can pay. Is not such an arrangement literally a making of the House of God "a house of merchandise?"<sup>3</sup> May we not imagine St. James, were he to appear among us, reproving not a few of our wardens and other officials

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xi. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Isa. lv. 1.

<sup>3</sup> John, ii. 16.



for having "respect of persons?" May we not fancy that we hear him asking indignantly, as in his own day, "If there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him? But ye have despised the poor."<sup>1</sup> Surely, in one place, on one day of each week, all of us should be able to view each other as fellow-creatures. "The rich and poor meet together: the Lord is the maker of them all."<sup>2</sup> That will be a day fraught with increase and blessing to our National Church, which shall see some equitable means adopted, for the entire abolition of the exclusive, distinctive pew-system,—a system which, I can testify from my own personal knowledge, is sometimes made the occasion of disgraceful jobbery.

I have heard it objected, that were unappropriated sittings *only* allowed in our churches, the well-dressed and sensitive would be weekly liable to be annoyed and disconcerted (in the very place where it is most desirable to be calm, and disposed to reflection) by persons not only unmannerly but uncleanly, intermingling with them. I believe that any such apprehension is quite unwarranted. In the miners of these parts (and I feel very

<sup>1</sup> Jam. ii. 2-6.

<sup>2</sup> Prov. xxii. 2.

sanguine that the same would prove true generally of their brethren in Staffordshire, Lancashire, and elsewhere), we have had to contend with, not a rude obtrusiveness, but an excessive timidity—an unconquerable reluctance in their wives and themselves, to enter any bench where happened to be seated even one person superior at all to them. They have preferred over-crowding each other, as decidedly the less of the two evils.

---

## B.

It would be simply unreasonable to find fault, on this account, with any among the congregations attending some of our modern churches; in the building of which the economizing of space seems to have been considered of incomparably greater importance, than the providing for devotion; where the worshipper, whilst sitting, is so cramped in front as to be physically incapable of giving profitable attention, and where kneeling is almost impracticable. Erections of this type seem mis-named “houses of prayer,” or “places of worship;” for who has not experienced how much the posture usually influences the feelings? It is to be feared that, in the case of many a well-disposed church-goer, the necessitated indecency of being seated, while supplications, expressive of profoundest self-abasement, are being offered to the Most High, has engendered, by insensible degrees, irreverence and coldness of heart.

It is a refreshing fact, indeed, that the drowsy high-backed pews of our grandfathers’ times are gradually

disappearing. So far, well. But why the opposite extreme? We do not attend church in order to *perform penance* for our sins, but to feel and confess them with the least possible distraction. Why should almost the poorest man find the accommodation provided for him in the house of God, inferior to what he is accustomed to in his own house? Why should any poor woman, weakly in health, perhaps from insufficient food, find, in the place to which she is taught to resort for her best consolation, nothing easier for such as herself to sit upon, than a bare board?

The amendment of this state of things is, I fear, very future. The supplying of such a desideratum is too commonplace and unobtrusive for the charity of the day. The funds needed for such a purpose, will only be forthcoming, according as real religion acquires its due place in public esteem; and the rich become disposed to render back unto the Lord a more grateful proportion of the means for good, with which He has blessed them. No one can hail with more sincerity than myself, the newly-awakened taste for ecclesiastical architecture; no one can entertain a livelier conviction of the propriety, the obligation, of the adequate and suitable decoration of our consecrated temples; no one can rejoice more heartily, on hearing of any person contributing a painted window or an elaborate font, to this or that church in progress of erection or restoration: but if the gift proceed from a purely unselfish motive, from a simple desire to do something for the honour of God and to promote religion; if it spring from a motive, unalloyed with any aspiration after popularity while living, and the perpetuation of his name as a local benefactor when dead,—I certainly am of opinion that every such donor will act wisely, if he ascertain

beforehand that, in connexion with the edifice, there is no other object upon which he can *better* bestow his generosity; and that the really essential and practical needs have been sufficiently provided for, *e.g.* the personal ease of every worshipper, poor as well as rich; and, I must add, the due maintenance of the minister.

---

### C.

So far as my experience in localities, widely distant and dissimilar, enables me to judge, I am inclined to believe that, if the wealthy would give as generously according to their several incomes, as the poor out of their scant earnings, the revenues of our Missionary societies would be, at least, quadrupled. Speaking generally (I say "generally," for I deny not that there are honorable exceptions), persons seem to dedicate a smaller proportion of their means towards religious and charitable objects, as they grow rich, or have been born rich. Individuals among the opulent may differ from each other in being penurious or extravagant, as regards their personal and domestic expenditure; but, as a body, they seem lamentably unanimous in sparing as little as decency will allow, for God and anything connected with Him. If induced to part with a sum which, though perhaps considerable in itself, is less, compared with what they possess, than the tenth of a farthing would be to any one of thousands of their fellow-men, the important fact somehow usually oozes out in print, to the glorification of the donor. I may add that, when collections are made for any purpose, the amounts given by many are found to be larger or

smaller, according to the degree of *publicity* in prospect. An incident occurs to my memory confirmatory of this assertion. The choir of a parish church were paid for their services annually by voluntary contributions; the name of each subscriber, and the amount of his subscription, being committed to paper. The aggregate did not always satisfy the singers, who expressed to the incumbent their conviction, that much more might be obtained, were a collection in church substituted. The desired change was at once conceded; but, alas! despite extraordinary efforts of vocal skill bestowed on the preceding chants and hymns, not more than half their wonted recompense was produced. One parishioner not knowing what another gave, the animating motive of out-giving each other no longer existed; the fear of shame was removed; all were enabled to be shabby with impunity. A marvellously potent instrument for extracting money is the subscription-list! Would the "Patriotic Fund" (and other like national efforts of charity in recent years) have attained so creditable an amount, had there been no publication of its several component sums, and of the persons and places contributing them, in the "Times" and otherwise? How much is there of spurious philanthropy! Compare the respective results of the various methods of collecting at church, and see whether or not they prove that much, if not the greater part, of what men give, they give from a regard for *self*, rather than from love for God or their fellow-men, or the nature and merits of the objects on behalf of which they give. Station receivers on each side of the church-door, and note how many a wearer of rustling flounces, or a glossy hat, will so contrive their exit, as to float out through the middle of the current, looking neither to the right nor

left. Let a covered box be held out to each separate occupant of every pew ; will not the kid-gloved fingers of many a body, arrayed in the newest fashion, be found quietly to insert a shilling (perhaps a fourpenny piece), which would have laid at least half-a-crown upon an *open plate*, had it been presented ? Verily, the caution and threat of the Divine Teacher on this subject, are not sufficiently regarded :—"Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them : otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven."<sup>1</sup>

---

## D.

It is no matter of surprise, that the editors of some newspapers, themselves professed Dissenters, should manifest a great readiness in helping to blazon forth every reported delinquency, great or small, committed by any one in holy orders. No consideration is likely to outweigh, in their minds, the opportunity of spicing their columns with a paragraph, sure of being read ; and they may argue that *they*, at least, are not under any obligation to treat with extraordinary tenderness ministers of the "State Church," who ought to be more careful than they are, not to furnish ground of accusation. The argument of such is not destitute of reason ; and their conduct is natural, though the spirit which prompts both, may not always tally with the Gospel standard. But what excuse can be offered for very many members of the National Church, who exhibit little or no more respect for the

<sup>1</sup> Matt. vi. 1.

Clergy in general; and not only are continually grumbling at the alleged indolence and deficiencies of those ministering in their own parish or town, but seem even to find a malicious pleasure in dwelling upon their every trivial indiscretion, and magnifying their every peculiarity; and are, of course, never satisfied with the sayings and doings of their own pastor in particular? Is the concern of these individuals for the failings, their solicitude for the improvement, of their spiritual instructors, wont to vent itself in intercessions before the throne of grace on their behalf? Are the majority of such persons so invulnerable themselves, that they must be considered privileged to be thus severe upon any section of their fellow-men? Were it possible for them to exchange positions with those against whom they are so ready to rail, how would they (their characters and conduct) endure that of a city set on a hill, which cannot be hid?

I doubt not that many of our censors might be found bold enough to answer these queries affirmatively. For among the bitterest of them are persons, who would fain be reckoned the choice representatives of the Church's piety in the place where they live; persons who have church matters and religious news (especially religious scandal) ever nearest to their lips;—who would miss, on no account, the speech or sermon of any Rev. Novelty, even though he figure on the theatrical high-promising placard in only middle-sized capitals; persons who look upon themselves as *the* champions of *the* Truth—evangelical Truth,—the Truth, that is to say, as it is discerned and defined by *themselves*, and the party to whom they belong. Deviate in opinion a hair-breadth from “the Truth” as thus interpreted, and you are wandering into the quicksands of error; decidedly so, at any rate, if

the view which you presume to take of some particular doctrine, seem in their eyes to incline (at however safe a distance, and with whatever modifications) towards that adopted by the Roman Catholic Church. Of Puseyism, even more than of Popery, they have a most sensitive horror;—a horror in which (within the bounds of reason) I am prepared to join them. But I ask,—Are these the churchmen who, with the most hearty sincerity, pray the two Ember-week prayers? Are these wont to make the fearful responsibility and peculiar temptations of their pastors, subjects of their devotions in private? How often do these persons vouchsafe a petition (which, according to their own estimate of themselves, would be “availing”<sup>1</sup> indeed) on behalf of “the ministers and stewards of God’s mysteries?” It is to be feared, seldom; and better not at all, than in that true Pharisee-style after which, a few years ago, I heard, at a select meeting, the conversion of the Bishop of the diocese supplicated.

As an illustration of the Puseyphobia alluded to, I may mention, that soon after entering upon my late cure, on a November morning (about the end of the month), one of my female servants was taken up, opposite Clandown, into an omnibus proceeding to Bath. She found among her fellow-passengers two gentlemen, one of whom remarked to the other,—“I hear that a new clergyman has come to Clandown; and they say he is a rank Puseyite,—burning candles in the daytime, and all that sort of thing.” Having listened for a while to the conversation which followed, she ventured to interrupt them with,—“I beg your pardon, Sirs, but being the clergyman’s cook, I beg to explain that my master has weak eyes,

<sup>1</sup> Jam. v. 16.



and is, in consequence, unable to deliver his afternoon sermon without lights in the pulpit. In no other part of the church, have I yet seen lights at any time."

Had I been present on the above occasion, I hope that I could have convinced these two gentlemen, that I am one of those who hate Popery intensely, as an infernal caricature of the religion of Christ; and have no sympathy with its Jesuitical abettors and promoters within the Church. I have, however, no fear that Popery will ever again become dominant in England through the gradual and subtle agency of Puseyism, nor with the help of the pecuniary contributions of the Continent, no, nor by the united prayers of "the faithful;" but I am not without fear, that it may (and in this generation), by the use of quicker and more efficacious means. Should a political necessity arise, of such urgency as to induce our military neighbour just across the Channel, to seek to avert impending danger from himself, by diverting the ill-affected with a carrying out of his uncle's dearly cherished project; should he be providentially permitted to fulfil what he is said to believe to be a part of his destiny, viz. the razing of Regent Street; should the Almighty, in just displeasure against ourselves for our unfaithful use of our unparalleled privileges, suffer his enormous army to gratify at length their burning longings to wipe off the reproach of Waterloo on British soil; and our dear native land to be reduced to a province of our ancient foe (though now nominal ally), Roman Catholic France,—is there anything utterly improbable in the supposition, that its worldly-wise ruler might then find it politically expedient to strengthen and secure the fidelity of that other influential body of supporters of his throne,—the priesthood,—by granting them leave to

adopt whatsoever measures they may deem best for the realization of *their* darling idea, the regaining of our spiritual allegiance to a Power superior even to Napoleon III. viz. the Vicar of Christ,—the bringing back of our apostate nation to the one true fold. In which case, who can deny the possibility of our adhesion to heresy being once more put to the test of the rack and the fagot?

“O God, merciful Father, graciously hear us, that those evils, which the craft and subtilty of the devil or man worketh against us, be brought to nought; and by the providence of Thy goodness, they may be dispersed; that we Thy servants, being hurt by no persecutions, may evermore give thanks unto Thee in Thy holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

---

## E.

Can any of us recollect a British Government (of whatsoever political professions) who have not been upbraided for their rashness, or sluggishness, or unfairness in legislation, by persons of all grades in every corner of the empire? In what community, in what class, may not members of the Church be heard finding fault with this or that line of policy, as though they were thoroughly acquainted with all the state secrets,—with all the circumstances which led to its adoption; and carping at this or that measure, as though quite as competent to decide the most complicated question, as any minister of the crown can be? But are these the persons, above all

others, regular and earnest on a Sabbath in "humbly beseeching a most gracious God" for their law-makers, that "*He would be pleased to direct and prosper all their consultations?*" Are these the persons most diligent and fervent in fulfilling St. Paul's exhortation, that supplications be made for all who are in authority?<sup>1</sup> I fear that the tongues of such are more used to accusation, than their hearts to prayer.

In the late war with Russia, what wide-spread and intense indignation did the infatuated blundering of those in power, excite in all classes of the people! But was there at all a corresponding vehemence of supplication to the Giver of wisdom on their behalf? If so, how shall we explain the fact, that so small a proportion of the people chose to embrace the opportunities of joining in the solemn invocations of the two appointed Fast-days?

---

## F.

Bearing in mind that the Sepoys, in perpetrating those fiendish enormities which have shocked and roused even the most callous and apathetic among us, have acted, not in violation of their pagan notions of right, but in a manner, as they believe, pleasing to the objects of their worship,—well may our petition for them be the words once put up from Divine lips for far less excusable murderers,—“Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”<sup>2</sup> Our feelings, in using the prayer of our

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Luke, xxiii. 34.

Liturgy, instead of being resentful, surely ought to be those of pity and self-reproach.

I believe that not a single instance is known to have occurred, from the commencement of this mutiny, of a native convert proving treacherous to any English person, or joining the rebel forces. What an argument does such a fact supply for the evangelization of India! for the increase of Missionary exertion! Oh! had the preaching of the Gospel been so much as *permitted* by a number of *Christian* traders, from the time of their settlement among those pagan millions, would the present terrible outbreak, and its attendant atrocities, have happened? May we not, judging upon ordinary principles, suppose, that the persevering endeavours of a century would have been blessed with the gathering-in of such a number of the conquered to the faith of the conquerors, as to have rendered any design of revolt by the remainder, too plainly hopeless to be attempted? Is it not credible, that we should, by this time, have had an attached Christian Sepoy army in our pay? Every drop of innocent blood which has been so cruelly shed, may cry from the ground for vengeance; not, however, in the same sense as that of the victims of Sinope, but vengeance rather on ourselves as a nation, who, in being suffered by God to accumulate in one way or another such an immensity of heathen territory, have had placed in our hands an unparalleled opportunity of extending His kingdom upon earth; but who, until comparatively lately, have worse than despised the glorious trust,—have utterly disowned it, as incompatible with the more important and pressing objects of mammon; nay, have prohibited even any private effort in furtherance of its discharge, and made the embracing by any one of our Hindoo or Mahomedan

soldiers of the very Gospel in which we profess to rest our hope of heaven for ourselves,—a crime punishable with instant dismissal from the ranks. Surely had the “merciful God, who hath made all men, and hateth nothing that He hath made, nor would the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live,” had He, in just displeasure, dealt with us according to our unfaithfulness, not an Englishman would there now be left upon the soil of India, where our vaunted name would be only a by-word and a proverb of reproach.

---

## G.

To any sincere pastor, painful is the sight of his people, month after month, premeditatedly turning their backs upon the Lord’s Table: but can it be reasonably wondered at, that persons, especially if kept at labour during the week, should stream out into the fresh air after a confinement of two hours,—for the most part in a constrained position,—with a satisfaction akin to that of as many school-boys? In the two cures which I have held, I have omitted the sermon on those mornings when the Lord’s Supper has been administered; so that the entire service might be concluded very little later than usual. To my adoption of this rule, I attribute the gratifying fact of a steadily increasing number of communicants in each place; and I do not doubt, that were the same tried by others, its expediency would be proved by the result; at least, until the present concatenation of

prayers, with all its repetitions, assigned as the work of a Sunday morning, shall, by being divided, be somewhat more adapted to the physical powers of ordinary mortals.

---

## H.

I have long reluctantly held the opinion, that by no body of people in England, calling themselves by the name of Christ, is there less sacrifice willingly made of personal ease and convenience for the sake of religion, than by members of the Established Church. With all our Scriptural purity of doctrine, it would be difficult, indeed, to most of us to answer the question, "*What do ye* more than others?" May we not learn from the Roman Catholics, a lesson on self-denial out of regard for the soul? We may denounce Popery as Antichrist; we may marvel how persons of average intelligence can accept its monstrous dogmas, can submit to be precluded from searching for themselves every part of the Book of books; but, whilst pitying them, are we sufficiently taking heed lest, at the Judgment, these bond-slaves of superstition rise, in tens of thousands, to condemn us, with all our superior privileges and enlightenment? We shall be wise in never forgetting the admonitory declaration of the Arbiter of their and our final destinies: "That servant which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes.

For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.”<sup>1</sup> A principle this, indisputably founded in reason and righteousness.

---

## I.

Our school not being subjected to Government inspection, we had comparatively little temptation to “cram,” or to make our primary object the bringing out choice specimens of intellectual brightness, rather than loyal and exemplary members of society, able and willing to do their duty in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call them. As most of our boys relinquished the week-day school for the coal-pit at the early age of eleven years (though they continued to attend the Sunday-school, some eight or nine years longer), we aimed at giving them nothing more than a plain and simple education; teaching them to read accurately, to write legibly, and to work out the more common rules in arithmetic. Our desire was, to make them competently proficient in a few elementary acquirements, likely to be practically useful to them; but, especially, rooting and grounding them in the Bible-principles of conduct; and so furnishing them, under God’s blessing, with an effectual antidote to the evil which is in the world.

I confess, that if a youth is intended, at the termination of his school-career, to get his livelihood as a collier or labourer, I do not discern the need of educating him

<sup>1</sup> Luke, xii. 47, 48.

sufficiently to qualify him for a clerkship in a solicitor's office. Will he not be likely to disdain the axe and spade, as humiliating to such a scholar as he? Or, if he should possess the good sense to enter upon his proper calling contentedly, however exquisite his penmanship, he will become more and more incapable of producing the like, as his hands become hardened and roughened by the kind of labour to which he will be put: however complete the scholastic polish, not long will he retain it amid the associations of a coal-pit.

Likewise as regards girls born to be servants, or at best sempstresses, whilst single,—and when married, most probably the wives of colliers, we were even less ambitious of a high degree of erudition: our anxious wish was rather to render them good and prudent, fitted to make a wedded home happy, and adequate to all the contingencies of their presumptive humble position. Such being our notions, I need hardly say that, no modern parish-school accomplishments were countenanced; no portion of a day was dedicated to Berlin wools or fancy-knitting; but every afternoon was employed (as I think) more profitably in plain sewing, and in learning to cut out, to make from first to last, and mend in the best manner, articles of ordinary clothing. To the carrying out of such old-fashioned views, an estimable young person was thoroughly competent, though far from laying claim to the varied and elegant acquirements presumed to adorn the “Lady Principal of a College;” or as such an one used to be called, “the mistress of a finishing school.”

In like manner, for the boys' department, we did not account the services of a “certificated” master absolutely indispensable. We were amply satisfied with one, of unexceptionable character, capable of imparting a sound



rudimentary education ; one prosecuting his duties with the ardour of an enthusiast ; full of devotion to his profession, and of fondness for his scholars ; one who is a rigid and unswerving disciplinarian (yet kind and considerate withal) during school-hours, but, at their termination, is ready to mingle with youthful zest in the sports of his boys,—by his occasional presence thereat, not only checking any possible improprieties of language or act, but securing their obedience from a loving respect for himself personally ; one who fails not to visit the parents, and ascertain the real cause of any child's absence whenever it occurs, and out of a manifestly sincere interest in their child's weal : expostulating with them in a friendly but firm way, if requisite. I say “firm,” because this is not unfrequently necessary in order to dispel a very common fallacy, that the clergyman as well as the master must have a mercenary purpose to serve, else they would not take so much trouble about others' children ; and that parents themselves confer an obligation, by sending their children to school. Such is a sort of master, in my humble opinion, much better adapted to a colliery or other similar district, than a man learned in all the wisdom of St. Mark's or Battersea Institutions, and minutely versed in the latest theory of school-management ; but who, perhaps, whilst sensitively jealous of the consideration which he assumes to be his due, mechanically goes through his daily course, with no higher object than to maintain his salary, or at best from a cold sense of duty ; and who, with the moment of closing the books, reckons his obligations discharged, goes home, and dismisses everything connected with the school from his mind ; or if he does now and then visit a parent in reference to some scholar, does so of disagreeable constraint.

I will only add, that however unwilling to dissent from some of my brethren, whose superior learning and practical knowledge of parochial work I would be the last to deny, I am dull enough to be sceptical as to the expediency of the high-pressure system of education now in vogue.

---

### K.

I would by no means have it inferred from this designation, that we were at all pretentious of fine Cathedral music, which, in a village church especially, must necessitate the praising of God by proxy. At the same time, our psalmody was not mere noise,—the inharmonious combination of screeching and bawling, heard to issue from some religious assemblies (though even that is more welcome to my ears than the spiritless, lugubrious sing-song, scarcely disturbing the sleepy tranquillity of some churches); nor did it comprise many of the new-fangled eccentric tunes, whose incompetent inventors seem to account difficulty of execution a perfect substitute for melody: almost every organist nowadays, being ambitious of giving to the world a specimen or two of his own peculiar talent. Our aim was to produce hearty congregational singing, really well led. Our choir consisted of about fifteen boys, selected for their voices out of the Sunday-school, and instructed by the organist at least four hours every week.

## L.

Is it at all probable that the masters and mistresses, in Bath or elsewhere, who require or consent to receive fish intended for the Sunday dinner on the Sunday forenoon,—thereby furnishing their fishmonger with a semblance of justification for keeping his assistants engaged in their ordinary business until past noon,—will treat those of their own household, who minister to their luxury, as fellow-beings with souls quite as precious in God's sight as their own?

Can the fashionable preacher-follower, who provides Sunday work for a cabman or chairman in conveying her to or from church, not scrupling, in order that herself may attend public worship, to encourage him in his too-willing neglect of public worship,—be expected to evince, in her home arrangements, much thoughtfulness for the spiritual interests of those under her own roof? Perhaps, in extenuation, she may allege, that exposure or the exertion of walking would be injurious to her. We will suppose, then, that hers is a case of genuine, not of imaginary, delicateness. If it be so, that either she must be prevented from attending public worship, or the person who has to convey her,—is it not clearly her duty to forego the privilege herself, rather than detain another from the house of God? Were there “a willing mind” on both sides, the necessity of the absence of either would be easily obviated. Let it at least not be wanting in *her*. If a cab be hired for her from livery stables, let it be ordered so as to reach the church ten minutes before the commencement of the service, and with a proviso that the driver of it be seen among the congregation. If she employs a cabman from a stand, let it be on the same

condition. In this latter case, however, it would be no more than reasonable, that she should give the man a small sum in addition to his fare,—sufficient to pay for the putting up of his horse and cab. The attendance of the driver until the conclusion of the service, would also render it necessary for herself to remain a few minutes longer.

If bad weather or bad health reduce any lady to the alternative of remaining at home, unless *conveyed* to her place of worship, I hesitate not to express my conviction, that her prayers in God's house are a mockery, if, by being there, she has prevented, or helped to prevent, some other person from being present. If she choose not to stipulate that her driver or chairman shall be at church, at least let her go so early that, so far as she is concerned, they may so do. It cannot with reason be asserted by any lady, in palliation of her own sinning, that even if she were to discontinue riding on a Lord's day, still would the cabmen and chairmen find others ready to employ them. Let each for herself do what is right; and her conscience will be clear (in this particular at least) of giving great occasion to the enemies of the Gospel to blaspheme.

The difficulty of removing this sickening scandal from the streets of Bath and elsewhere, would be considerably less, were these praying Sabbath-breakers, and those whose services they use, all members of the National Church. Such, however, is not the case. A friend of mine, a clergyman, when sojourning in a provincial city a while ago, could not refrain from expostulating with a cab-proprietor, on the wickedness of his allowing his men and horses little or no rest on the Sabbath, and was answered after this manner:—"Ah! it is you religious people who keep us

hard at work. We have to begin—early too,—first in taking the —— (a body of Dissenters) to their chapels; then the —— (another body of Dissenters) require us. We get done with them just in time to attend to the church-folk. By the time they are settled, the first-mentioned Nonconformists are ready to be brought back, then the second, and then yourselves.” What reply could my friend make to all this? He might have reminded the man, that although others *can ask* him to violate the the Sabbath for their personal accommodation, they *cannot compel* him; and that if he could prevail on himself to forego the gains of perhaps the most lucrative day of the week, an approving God would amply compensate him for the self-denial. But I fear that he would have been little likely to listen to any such arguments. He had doubtless been so disgusted by the hypocrisy of “you religious people,” that he was prejudiced against religion, which would only excite in him a smothered sarcasm, by whomsoever recommended. Notwithstanding, surely this cab-proprietor, possessing a Bible, and knowing the Divine will declared in the fourth commandment, had no justification for not acting as an individual Christian man, accountable to God for himself.

It is gratifying to hear, now and then, of persons connected with his trade, who, though socially they may be inferior to him, are morally very superior,—persons who do not suffer themselves to contract any such bias, and through grace also conquer in themselves, what in him was probably stronger than the bias—that “love of money” which, an apostle warns us, “is the root of all evil.”<sup>1</sup> A lady with whom I am acquainted relates, in a

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. vi. 10.

little tract,<sup>1</sup> an instance of a London cabman, who attracted a gentleman's favourable notice, by bringing back a sovereign which the latter had given him, the night before, by mistake for a shilling. The gentleman, "himself a kind-hearted and honourable man, and appreciating all honourable dealings in others, insisted on the poor cabman's retaining the sovereign, and then proceeded to say, that as he never used his own carriage and horses on Sundays, he would employ him for the future to drive him to church, and would pay him a higher fare than usual for so doing. Instead of accepting his offer at once, as he expected, the poor cabman declined it, giving as his reason, that the same God who had said, 'Thou shalt not steal,' also commanded, 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy;' that since he had known the value of his soul, and the love of his Saviour, he had taken his family and gone to church regularly himself twice a-day, and had spent the remaining hours in reading God's Word, and imparting religious instruction to his children. Upon being further asked, whether he had not been a loser by the sacrifice, he replied that, on the contrary, God had so prospered him ever since he had had grace thus to act, that he was by no means a poorer man; for he invariably made the same sum of money, or more, during the six days of the week, as he had formerly done when he plied on the seventh day as well. He acknowledged that at first it had been to him a great exercise of faith; but that he had cast it upon God in prayer, and 'the prayer of faith' was heard."

---

<sup>1</sup> "The Honest Cabman," by A. M. de H. Wertheim and Mackintosh.

## M.

A laudable attempt was lately made, to abate the public scandal of "the great social evil" in the city which ought, not only in outward decorum, but in purity of morals, to be the model capital of Christendom. May the London movement be followed up; and not only there, but in every large community of our land! A combined determined effort of the righteous, in the spirit of prayer, would assuredly be not without its reward. But besides the professed street-walkers, who openly pursue prostitution as a means of livelihood, not all persons are aware of the extent to which unchastity prevails among *female servants* in provincial towns. That Bath (or any place similarly circumstanced) should be atrociously corrupt in this respect, cannot surprise, when we take into account its succession of pleasure-seeking visitors, and observe the foppish loungers with which its streets abound in "the season." But, go where we will, into any town cursed with the vicinity of barracks, into any seaport, or any smoky, squalid manufacturing town, is not profligacy everywhere rampant? Yes; even finds lodging and maintenance unsuspectedly in the nurseries and kitchens of private houses. I heard a while ago, on medical authority, respecting a town with which I am very familiar, that in a section of it where reside some of the principal families, not a domestic was at that time to be found, who could not be proved to have fallen. Will the heads of any of those families, whenever they discover the disgraceful fact, be able to acquit themselves entirely of blame? Has there been no neglect of reasonable vigilance on their part, of kind and serious admonition, of timely

reproof? Surely such a state of morals can hardly exist in private houses conducted religiously.

Masters and mistresses may have most stringent household regulations, and abide by them : but in order to this, they must, as becomes Christians, rule by love ; they must, by their considerateness, by their uniform kindness, by their evidently heartfelt interest in their servants' good, and, above all, by their silent weight of character, conciliate the respect and affection of their domestics. Served in love, they will be served with their servants' best energies ; and in this anxiety of desire to please, possess no mean security for their servants' steadfastness in a virtuous course. By many, the method of treatment here suggested may be objected to, as necessitating too much familiarity on their own part, and inviting presumption on the servants',—indeed, entailing more self-denial than they themselves choose to exert. Until such have fully tried it, however, let them not complain that domestics now-a-days do not know their proper position ; and that, through excess of learning, and servants' clubs or unions,—to keep them within the bounds of order has become no longer practicable.

I believe it to be in consequence of the general neglect or contempt of the foregoing Scriptural principles of conduct shown towards servants, that many of them are what they are ; and I believe that too commonly, when servants are charged with fault, and are being continually changed, the fault in truth belongs to the fault-finder.

---

## N.

I am one of those who would rejoice to see somewhat



more of the spirit of the early days of Christianity, infused into the discipline of our Reformed Church. If it be notorious that numbers of utterly unfit persons are continually admitted, in the present day, into the office of Godparent, and that the office itself is treated as a sinecure; can any clergyman hold himself guiltless, if he does not all in his power to check such laxity? If it be a law of the Church of England, that *none but communicants* be accepted as sureties for others' children, why is it not acted upon? Is it not founded in reason? Is it not right in itself? To what are we to ascribe the practical ignoring of this and other wise and Scriptural regulations of our Church? To a craven, faithless shrinking from doing anything counter to "the enlightened spirit of the age." Well would it be for our consistency in the eyes of the world, if we repealed laws which we have not the moral courage to carry out. But well will it be for the Church's efficiency, when its discipline, so sound in theory, shall be less of a sham in fact; calculated to excite only the ridicule and contempt of those without, and to allow of almost any amount of scandal in those within.

Undoubtedly, as things are, much may be done by every individual parish-minister in furtherance of its improvement. Very much (otherwise impracticable) may be accomplished, and obtain complete acquiescence, by kindness, temperateness, and seasonableness in the doing; and in the doer, a clearly utter absence of the faintest desire to lord it over God's heritage, and indisputable evidence of his having really at heart the souls' interests of his people. But there must be something more, if he would possess the influence requisite to enable him, without much disaffection, to act up to his convictions, by complying with the laws of his own Church. There must be seen in him

a pastoral faithfulness, unsparing of himself, and—an unexceptionable excellence of character, which commands the *respect* of all, if it does not conciliate their affection. When within the borders of his parish, he must carefully “abstain from all appearance of evil,” by frequenting no company or place from which he may not consistently, and without a violent change in the current of his thoughts, be summoned to the chamber of the dying,—a scene where, in discharging the most spiritual and difficult of all the duties of his sacred office, lack of Divine grace can be supplied with nothing of earth, and where the temper of the metal is put to one of the least fallacious of tests. Throughout every day of a week, while a cordial despiser of sacerdotal dandyism, he will be seen in attire thoroughly distinctive, and according with the duties of his solemn vocation; his manner of dress having, in my own judgment, more to do with the effect of his personal presence, and the weight of his words in his intercourse with his flock, than perhaps some of my brethren will admit. From early morn to the hour of rest, he will never be caught, by any parishioner seeking an interview, in a slovenly condition, and so endanger the respect due to his office; still less will he be seen, even in his most unrestrained moments, in any garb suggestive of a derisive smile, or indulging in any frivolities which may be harmless in a layman, but are humiliating and unseemly in a “minister of Christ, and a steward of the mysteries of God,”<sup>1</sup> and which are liable to revive in the minds of beholders, when their pastor presents himself in his pulpit on the Sabbath, and lamentably to mar the efficacy of his words, though he should preach with the tongue of an

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. iv. 1.

angel. He will seldom be heard to utter to one parishioner anything concerning another, unless he can speak favourably; and he will be careful that, under all circumstances whatsoever, nothing proceeds out of his mouth, but "that which is good to the use of edifying."<sup>1</sup> In short, he will strive, in dependence on the Holy Spirit, to pursue his fearfully responsible path with quietness, prudence, straightforwardness, and guilelessness. Equally will he walk with God when out of his parish. He will never be discovered to have relaxed, when from home, in his style of dress or home strictness of demeanour, or afford the shadow of a pretext for his enemies to hint, that he is not unwilling, when out of the sight of his own people, to pass as a layman,—to be relieved, for a while, at least, from a forced official sanctity inwardly distasteful to him, and to indulge in a worldliness of which, in heart, he is quite as fond as others. "Once a clergyman, always and everywhere a clergyman," is the motto of every man worthy of being "an ambassador for Christ."<sup>2</sup> He "magnifies his office;"<sup>3</sup> he adorns it, rather than brings scandal upon it. He does not appear with "the season" in Bath, or other places of like resort, to excite the indignant pity of his more conscientious brethren, and the secret scorn of even the worldly about him, by exhibiting his incongruous figure amid the giddy frivolities of the "public ball," or the arrant absurdities of the "fancy ball;" soon afterwards returning to his "living," possibly to caution his young confirmants, high and low, against "the pomps and vanities of this wicked world," or to admonish this and that humble attendant at a late tavern dance; or very probably (willing for others to follow

<sup>1</sup> Eph. iv. 29.<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. v. 20.<sup>3</sup> Rom. xi. 13.

their own inclinations, as he indulges his) to drawl, or mumble, or hurry through his stated services in an half-empty church, heedless and undeserving alike of the regard of his fellow-men, and of the grace of his Divine Master ; or, maybe, returning to stir up with renewed vigour the embers of party-prejudice, by an indiscreet enforcing of some point of church-discipline, which his people are unprepared to accept at *his* hands, but which a wiser and better man would find little difficulty in introducing by degrees, to the acknowledged general benefit.

Every true friend of the National Church, every sincere Christian whoever he be, every one who wishes well to the cause of religion in our land, must greatly regret that our bishops are not invested with more absolute and direct power over their clergy ; and that they are able to do little more than grieve, in common with every right-minded layman, on reading of the improprieties of these reverend triflers.

---

## O.

Whenever that urgently needed (but I fear still distant) measure—a judicious revision of our Liturgy—shall be resolved on and taken in hand, possibly it will occur to some one of those to whom the work is committed, that this Exhortation is out of place, and might advantageously be blended with the first of those put into the mouth of the minister, when he “giveth warning for the celebration of the Holy Communion” on the preceding Sunday. It seems to be hardly the fit time to bid

intending Communicants “*diligently* to try and examine themselves,” when the service is actually in progress, and in a few minutes those present will be expected at the Table. If, under the reading of this Exhortation, conscience admonishes any one that he is not what he ought to be, in penitence, faith, charity, or gratitude,—what must he do? He is compelled either to disregard his scruples, and persist in partaking; or render himself an object of remark by remaining seated or going out.

---

P.

The graves in Clandown burial-ground are indicated by even rows of narrow, oblong, flat-topped flower-beds; the sides of which are a few inches in height, and of grass. The gayest sorts of greenhouse plants being plentifully interspersed, the spot was during summer and autumn a bright and pleasing scene, in which the villagers evinced great interest; and doubtless some were first attracted to public worship thereby. I must not omit to mention, that not only grown-up persons (many of whom were strangers from other parishes), but even the children, most carefully abstained from plucking any of the flowers. Are there many other parts of England, where the same temptation would have been equally withstood, even in God’s acre?





